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VEDANTA

OR

THE SCIENCE OF REALITY

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THE SCIENCE OF REALITY

BY

K. A. KRISHNASWAMI IYER, B.A.

MYSORE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE (Retd.)

Joint Translator of 'Panchadasi'

WITH A FOREWORD BY

DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN, M.A.

OF THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

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TO

SANKARA

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FOREWORD

IT is fortunate that many students of Indian Philosophy trained in the renowned traditional methods of our Sanskrit Pandits are now coming forward to interpret the truths of ancient systems in the language and style familiar to students of Western Thought. Of this remarkable group, Mr. K. A. Krishnaswami Iyer is one of the most notable. He is an ardent advocate of the system of Sankara, and in this book he attempts to transmit to his readers a little of his great enthusiasm for it. Mr. Iyer brings to his task a well-stored mind, critical insight, and a capacity to envisage his subject as a whole. He has read everything worth reading on his special subject and has pondered deeply on the fundamental insights of Vedanta. His book embodies the ripe reflections of a life devoted to the study of the Advaita Philosophy.

Mr. Iyer distinguishes, at the outset, the Hindu Religion from the Vedanta Philosophy on which it is based. He points out the long distance which the religion has to traverse, if it is to embody the main tenets of charity and tolerance characteristic of the Philosophy. "Being the science of the ultimate truth, Vedanta is the backbone of the Hindu Religion" (P. 6); yet "the outlook of the Hindu Religion is comparatively narrow and its methods radically dogmatic" (P. 10). The fundamental truths on which Vedanta is based are by no means the monopoly of the Hindu Religion. The author's frequent references to Buddhism, Christianity and Islam indicate the free spirit of respectful appreciation characteristic of a true Vedantin, though unfortunately this breadth of view is mistaken for lack of conviction by many critics.

A good part of the book is devoted to a discussion of Western Thought with special reference to the truths of Vedanta. While the main motive of the author is to establish the superiority of the Vedanta Philosophy, his criticisms of Western views are generally acute, reasoned and above all good-natured. Some of his judgments such as that "Schopenhauer's philosophy is the greatest effort made by Westerners to grasp life in its fullest significance" (P. 289) may be questioned, but they are always interesting and often illuminating. It is perhaps an advantage to

have comparative discussions since our University students happen to know more of Western Thought than of Eastern.

The central point of distinction between the two currents of thought is well brought out. While Philosophy is more a matter of speculation or theory in the West, in the East it is more a question of experience or life. Commenting on Hegel, the author says: "Hegel contrives to rise above the subject and the object to a self-consciousness transcending both. But this is only a logical necessity, necessity of the laws of thought and can never attain to the rank of a truth rooted in a fact of life and experience." (P. 24) Philosophy should base itself on acknowledged facts and not on hypothetical possibilities. So, after Gaudapada and Sankara, the author takes his stand on life with its three independent aspects of waking, dream and sleep. While time, space and causation characterise the states of waking and dream, the state of sleep is free from their sway. We seem to have in sleep pure consciousness free from subject-object relations. The human spirit is wholly identical in the state of sleep with Pure Consciousness, which is the absolute reality that none can deny or dispute. We cannot deny our own existence. We cannot conceive our own non-existence. We experience uninterrupted continuity of life through the three states of waking, dream and sleep. Discontinuity is inconceivable. (P. 91) Whatever we may say about the status of the objects of knowledge, affirmation or denial, doubt or supposition, there is one thing without which everything else will fail and that is the self as Pure Consciousness. It is present right through, in our affirmations and denials, in our doubts and speculations. When the Deity introduced Himself to Moses on Mount Horeb, He called Himself "I am." "Say to the children of Israel, "I am" hath sent me unto you." If we go behind our conceptions of God, we will find that the essence of the highest reality is "I am," pure self-affirming consciousness. "I am" is the universal light that never goes out, the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. *Tasya bhāsā sarvam idam vibhāti.* As self-affirming, we human beings share the nature of the Supreme. *Tattvam asi. Aham Brahmāsmi.* The Advaita Vedanta emphasizes man's immanent and potential infinitude.

The religious mind has a longing for a personal relation with a mind and a will, at once the source of all reality and a living presence in the soul. A person alone can be the object of devotion and worship. Mr. Chesterton once wittily remarked that, while the Christian idea of Heaven is a condition in which we shall all love one another, the Hindu idea makes it a condition in

which we shall all *be* one another. It will be more accurate if we substitute 'theist' for 'Christian' and 'absolutist' for 'Hindu.' The Advaita recognises that for many philosophy cannot take the place of religion. A proposition that the infinite spirit underlies and reveals itself in life is not enough. Religion is binding a man's will to a Will greater than itself. We get the conception of a personal God eternally engaged in self-expression. It is the disguise worn by the Supreme Reality to the time-bound intellect.

The relation between the world of multiplicity and the Absolute is an inconceivable one and this inconceivability is denoted by the word 'Maya'. "Any attempt to connect the Absolute with its manifestations in the shape of the world must end in failure, for no relation can be imagined beyond the sphere of duality". (P. 46) Pure Consciousness cannot be regarded as the seed which contains the world-tree in potency; for in every instance of organic development, the substance is exhausted in its manifestation, the cause in the effect. Pure Consciousness though the basis of the world remains at the same time integral and undivided. It is more like "a fountain, possessing no other principle, but imparting itself to all rivers, without being exhausted by any of them and abiding quietly in itself".* Pure Consciousness is the changeless witness in us throughout the three states. It transforms itself into waking consciousness with its law and order and it again dissolves back in sleep without a residuum into Pure Consciousness which is the basis of all changes. The relation between the two is inconceivable to the intellect but when the latter insists on tracing the world-effect to a cause, ignorance or avidya is said to be the causative force. Ignorance disappears with knowledge. It does not follow, however, that the world is a mere illusion. This popular misconception is repudiated by the author. The world is not a mere phantasy but has its own grade of reality. (P. 90.)

In the course of the book are found many interesting discussions about the ethical aspects of the Advaita, karma and rebirth, authority and mysticism. Throughout, the author emphasizes the profound importance of the study of the three states.

I have not been able to give the careful and concentrated study which the book requires and deserves. It is not a compendium of information or a common text-book. It offers to general readers interested in Philosophy, as well as to University students, a sympathetic and at the same time scholarly account of

* Thomas Taylor: Five Books of Plotinus, P. 237.

the leading ideas of Advaita Vedanta such as may prepare the way for the more elaborate and erudite commentaries and criticisms. I hope the scholar will not look askance at the work for the reason that it does not possess the usual apparatus of learning—footnotes, references, and a transliteration in the approved style. These latter would certainly have added to the usefulness of the work, but the main thesis, dealing as it does with a profound study of the logical implications of the three states, is developed with great power and dialectical skill and the conclusions depend on logical argument and not textual authority. The book will appeal to many readers who seek for rational solutions of life-problems and shy at bewildering accounts of Indian systems apparently loaded with much learning. Though the book is written with great distinction and even charm, it is not easy reading; but there are not many books which will better repay the labour. No student who proposes to deal seriously with the issues involved can afford to neglect it or is likely to do so for many a year to come. For myself, I hope to be able to return to it with greater care, which, I know, will be to greater profit.

Calcutta
1st November, 1930

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

PREFACE

VEDANTA exercises an enduring fascination on all thoughtful minds. Numerous works have been written by reputed scholars and great thinkers, expounding its principal doctrines. The justification for the appearance of my work consists in the fact that it treats Vedanta as a science based on common life and experience. Whatever may be the public judgment on it I have the satisfaction of having made the attempt. If abler minds proceeding on the same line should achieve greater success, none would be happier than myself.

The significance of the Avasthas was first borne in upon me more than thirty years ago, through my contact with two eminent teachers whose method was rational to the core. One of them was the late Anantappa Maharaj of Bangalore and the other, Motuganahalli Sankara Sastry. They were to me the living representatives of the great Sankara, the World-Teacher.

A brief note is perhaps necessary on the word 'Vedanta'. In the writings of Sankara and others, it occurs in two senses, (1) a passage or text of the Upanishads, (2) the system of thought underlying them. In the former sense, the word admits of the plural, 'Vedantas'; in the latter it must be taken as a Singular Significant Name, like 'Providence', 'Nature', &c., admitting of no article before it. I have hence invariably adhered to the form 'Vedanta', without the article, when it denotes the well-known system of thought.

The reader will meet in this work with repetitions of truths and statements which, as they are mostly unfamiliar though essential, could have been avoided only at the cost of perspicuity. Also, in spite of the utmost care, a number of errata have crept in, a list of which is appended at the end, and for which I apologize. Any other errors of thought or expression that may be kindly brought to my notice will be thankfully acknowledged. In a second edition, if this work is destined to have one, they will not appear. Notwithstanding these and other defects, the reader who realizes the greater seriousness of life will, I hope, sympathize with my endeavour at performing a Herculean task, whatever its merits.

PREFACE

I am deeply indebted to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, author of several philosophical works of unequalled merit, who has furnished this book with a sympathetic Foreword.

My sincere acknowledgments are due to the great thinkers of the world who have trodden the same path before me, and to many kind friends who have helped financially and in other ways towards the publication of this work. Among these are: Mr. S.C. Srinivasacharya, B.A., retired Tahsildar, my early classmate; Mr. V. Subrahmanya Iyer, B.A., retired Registrar, Mysore University, the well-known Vedantic writer who has ever contended for a rational presentation of Vedantic truths on modern lines; Mr. G. Srinivasa Iyer, B.A., M.L., Judge of the High Court, Mysore, a Sanskrit scholar and admirer of Sankara; Mr. A.R. Nagesvara Iyer, B.A., B.L., Advocate, High Court, Mysore, an ardent student of Vedanta. My heart-felt thanks are also due to the following: Mr. Y. Subba Rau, the author of 'Mulavidyanirasa', who interpreted to me various ticklish passages in the works of Sankara and whose rational cast of mind is an asset to Vedantic literature; Mr. K. Sampatgiri Rao, M.A., Head Master of the National High School, Bangalore, of high intellectual gifts, who read the proofs and made invaluable suggestions; Mr. K.S. Krishna Iyer, B.A., Assistant Master of the same school, who read the proofs and copied out most of the manuscript; Mr. K. N. Krishnaswamy Iyer, B.A., of the Mysore Secretariat, who copied out part of the manuscript; Mr. D. Venkataramiah, B.A., L.T., retired Circle Inspector of Schools, Bangalore, devoted to a critical study of Sankara and the Vedantic tradition; and last, but not least, Mr. V. Venkatarama Sastry of Madras, a true Yogin and Vedantin whose æsthetic and literary tastes united to zeal and selfless exertions have largely helped the work to materialize. He has guided me with his valued advice at every stage.

In conclusion, I express my deep gratitude to the Great Being whose wonderful manifestation is this mysterious universe, who lights up all souls great and small, from whose grace spring all our tiny activities, before whose might all earthly grandeur is but dust and glamour.

Basavangudi, Bangalore
6th November, 1930

K. A. KRISHNASWAMY IYER

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Up. *for* Upanishad.
Brihad. *for* Brihadaranyaka.
S. B. *for* Sankara's commentary on Brahma Sutras.
P. C. *for* Pure Consciousness.
Emp. *for* Empirical.

INTRODUCTION

LIFE taken in any of its aspects is of the deepest interest to man. It is his sweetest, dearest possession. It introduces him into a mysterious world of beauty and power—of action and enjoyment. Empirical science studies Life in its phenomenal phase as appealing to the senses and the intellect, while philosophy endeavours to obtain a comprehensive view of Life as a whole and to grasp its very essence. But Life studied only in one of its manifestations is elusive in its nature, and this has given rise to many different and opposed views among philosophers who severally group themselves under the heads of idealists, realists, monists, pluralists, nihilists and so on.

This irreconcilable divergence is due to partial views of life, of Life not considered as a whole but as restricted to its manifestation in the Waking state alone. When we speak of the world or life we commonly mean our Waking experience, and if we happen to refer to the states of Dream and Deep Sleep, we regard these only as adjuncts to Waking. This is indeed sufficient for practical purposes, but a correct understanding of the underlying principle of Life requires that we should consider it in its entirety, which, however, is impossible so long as we subordinate the other two states to Waking. But Nature is as insistent on the former as on the latter and will not grant the privileges of life to one content with eternal Waking. As food invigorates the body, sleep refreshes the soul and Nature ordains sleep for the preservation of life. The great thinkers of the world err therefore in their notion that Waking comprehends all life. Their failure to explain it is ascribable to their imperfect view, to which may also be traced the great disagreement that prevails among them. The flow of life is punctuated by the states of Deep Sleep, Dream and Waking. Men take it up only at the Waking stage and attempt to reconstruct Life by piecing together the recurring intervals of Waking alone, to the utter exclusion of its other two phases; with the result that the continuum or Reality is utterly missed. In the Bible, we find the words, "God giveth truth to His beloved in Sleep." Psalm CXXVII, 2. (German Translation.). Nevertheless it must be confessed that Sleep and Dream have hitherto not entered into the calculations of the philosopher who dismisses them with a brief word or two. No marvel, then, that Life remains shrouded in mystery.

Vedanta, the philosophic system of the Upanishads differs from all others, ancient or modern, in this vital respect. It does not seize upon only particular points of life, however interesting or valuable, and by juxtaposing these, claim to explain the entire flux. It takes in at a glance the whole flow—if flow it were—from Sleep to Waking and from Waking to Sleep, and extracts the one principle which swims with the current and *is* the current. The truth it reveals does not therefore need to fear from the inroads of science or the speculations of men.

Vedanta is thus a science of our own life, that with which we are most familiar, a view based on intuition and conscious experience leaving out no feature of life in its widest sense. But to do justice to its conception of the Universe or Reality we must bear in mind the social, moral and intellectual conditions that gave rise to it and the ideals that inspired our forbear in the remote past.

The Rishis or the Vedic seers of eternal truths avoided crowded centres of life and lived mostly in forests and on river banks. They were not much attracted by life in the towns which were almost entirely peopled by warriors, merchants, artisans and labourers. Now and then a king famous for his love of learning was able to draw the Brahmavadins from their seclusion, but otherwise the current of spiritual life in these out-of-the-way settlements, seems to have flowed on undisturbed by the political events that left their mark on the capital cities. A trace of this love of seclusion is to this day to be found among certain classes of Hindus and the tendency crystallized perhaps very early into the instinct of touchability and untouchability of brother-man.

But we should be carrying away very wrong impressions of the mental and moral disposition of these forest-dwellers if we supposed that they were ignorant of the power of wealth or indifferent to the interests of humanity. Some of them were invited to the King's court and were sent back loaded with rich presents, while all the arts and sciences then known of practical life originated from them. We should therefore be cautious before condemning their views as due to misanthropy or ignorance, or as the vain lucubrations of an idle brain. The seriousness of life was much more keenly felt by them than by their jaunty critics of modern times; and their love of truth and reality led to abnegations of self almost heroic. The section of Vedas dealing with Works gives detailed instructions about the performance of rites and sacrifices, and is wholly concerned with concrete facts and settled convictions rather than with subtle fancies or empty abstractions. Agni, Varuna, Indra and Rudra were real persons

whose grace and displeasure were zealously sought or sedulously avoided. That such a people should believe in a Brahman which is a mere name or a meaningless concept is neither natural nor true. The Upanishads or the portion devoted to knowledge and meditation are throughout pervaded by a spirit of sincerity and earnestness; and discussions bearing on the highest reality are conducted freely and fearlessly, presenting an edifying contrast to the dogmatic fanaticism with which men sometimes justify their beliefs in the 20th century of the Christian Era.

If then this hankering after seclusion on the part of the Vedic sages did not arise from a churlish incompetence to appreciate the advantages of town life, what could be their object in living so far away from the common people? What lured them away into caves and jungles, hill-sides and river-banks, courting discomforts and dangers? If power, riches, or enjoyment were their ideals, they could with their intellectual gifts have entered the arena of struggle with positive hopes of success. If they had prized woman's love, they need not have vowed themselves, as some of them did, to lives of strict celibacy. They laid upon themselves the severest moral discipline altogether inconceivable to us or perhaps impossible in our age. To what end? Nothing is easier or more flattering to our sense of self-importance than to explain away this feature of ancient Hindu life as the effect of ignorant superstition or blind observance of custom. May be they were not so advanced in some sciences or possessed such appliances as make life delightful nowadays, but they practised yoga and attained to spiritual powers, which to us of superior sapience sounds mythical; while they rose to such heights of literary splendour as is likely to remain an unsurpassed marvel for all time.

These wonders were achieved by a life of self-control and self-denial indispensable to the growth of Vedantic knowledge. The results of their meditation and simple austere life have proved to be the most momentous for the well-being of man, for they are nothing less than the discovery of the highest truth bringing in its train bliss and immortality to man—"solace in life and solace in death" as described by Schopenhauer.

There is not the least doubt that urban life has a tendency to narrow the angle of our intellectual and moral vision. Every man, whatever his calling, is fully occupied with his daily pursuit; and nothing is more real to him than the means by which he earns his bread, or the social and domestic events which concern him in his struggle for existence. An active man has no time for spiritual meditation and one ever absorbed in duties of immediate urgency

feels not the goad to discern truths transcending the present moment. In the midst of a multitude of active pursuits, every man attaches the highest significance naturally to the one that tasks his own energies and thus he develops a bias against the rest, whereby his mind becomes unfitted for a comprehensive grasp of questions affecting mankind as a whole. The creature of the day, the event of the hour is apotheosised, and scarcely one in a thousand ever feels the fever of curiosity to know Life as a whole or the mysterious principle underlying it. Philosophy comes to be looked upon as something too high or too fanciful to be of any practical value.

But the men of Vedic age while they perfected themselves in the practice of every virtue and attained to the highest powers of self-suppression were anxious to pierce the veil of mystery in which life was enwrapped and to grasp the Reality behind it. This naturally led to an exclusive devotion to the object of their ambition, a life of penance and meditation, a life free from cares and attachments.

Their preference therefore for a life in the forest was not dictated by a contempt for the goods of life nor by a desire to escape from its duties in quest of undisturbed enjoyment. For, great and many were the hardships and privations to which they had to submit in their chase after airy and unsubstantial ideals. The impulse that moved them, the constant urge in them, was the determination to rise above the common joys and sorrows of life, to come at a view of Life that included and transcended the change in identity seemingly characterising it, to obtain a peep beyond the inane rotation of petty joys and cares that inevitably terminated in Death. In spite of their love of beauty and fine æsthetic sense of which we have abundant evidence, in spite of their keen appreciation of the many harmless pleasures with which life abounded, they felt an irrepressible yearning for the realisation of the principle of all existence—the one Reality that was the real of reals; for they felt that this world notwithstanding its features of seductive beauty and sublimity was not the All, nor this life the highest or the ultimate fact, since neither of them can explain itself. How came this world of concepts and percepts into being? How do I find myself put in communication with it? Is there a Reality behind and can I know it? These questions constantly tormented the ancient seers and they manfully grappled with them. The Upanishads contain the conclusions that were reached on all these vital points. We moderns might not agree with them all, but notwithstanding our pre-eminence in science and art we must con-

fess we have no solutions to show to our credit that can pretend to be more rational, more definite or more soul-satisfying.

The aim of Vedanta then is primarily to discover Truth and Reality. To this day the Hindu in his common prayer asks not for daily bread, but for Divine guidance of his will and understanding. In the Kathopanishad, Nachiketas, a mere boy of ten, goes to Yama, the God of Death, to learn from him as the most competent authority, the secret of Life and Death. Bhrigu in the Taittiriya approached Varuna, his father, with an ardent request that the nature of Brahman, the highest Reality, might be explained to him. Svetaketu's father asks his youthful son just returning from his preceptor, apparently proud of his learning, whether he learnt from his master about That (reality) the knowledge of which includes (or supersedes) the knowledge of everything. Janaka repeatedly implores Yajnavalkya, the most impressive personality in all the Upanishads, to expound to him the Truth that would set him free from the bonds of Ignorance. In Aitareya it is remarkable that the Self is depicted as arriving at a knowledge of itself by pure introspection. Thus the great thinkers of ancient India tackled the problem of life not solely to discover its relation to our conduct and happiness, but also to derive that supreme satisfaction, namely, that of having realised the enduring bottom, the spiritual *terra firma*, on which the phenomenal universe takes its stand. Accordingly Vedanta proceeds to evaluate the facts of life in its entirety, in terms not of wealth, pleasure, or other objects of common ambition, but in those of the Absolute Reality which vitalises and bathes all in its spiritual flood. For the beauty of a marionette cannot allure one that seeks a real spouse, nor the transitory joys of temporal power or office content the soul that thirsts for a knowledge of the enduring basis of life and action.

The origin of Vedanta is unknown. Throughout the Vedas there are references indirect but unmistakable to its fundamental doctrines. In fact the unity of thought that prevails through the portion of Works as well as that of Knowledge, notwithstanding the cyclopædic diversity of the topics, is astonishing and cannot escape an observant eye. For the whole of this vast literature seems to be cast in one mould—such is the general harmony of tone, reigning throughout. One circumstance is indeed unique. While the tendency of the human mind is to evolve from the simpler to the more complex processes of thought, the Chandogya and the Brihadaranyaka, both the oldest in language and tone, set out the highest truths in their most perfected, unambiguous and rational form of which the later Upanishads might be considered as mere

repetitions or amplifications, sometimes so vague and obscure that the eager student finds in them little to satisfy his spiritual thirst. Thus the theory of gradual evolution does not seem to apply to Vedantic truths, at least so far as we can trace their growth.

Coming to us from such hoary antiquity, Vedanta exercises an incalculable influence on the Hindu mind. It supplies the key to the inner working of the National soul. Being the science of the ultimate truth, it is the backbone of the Hindu religion. The power of the latter to withstand the successive buffetings of foreign faiths, how attractively so ever presented, rests wholly on the rock-bed of Vedanta on which the doctrines of Hinduism are founded. Considering how largely Vedanta is responsible for the moulding of Hindu thought and life, and what potentiality it has to bring within the pale of its influence all men that love peace and harmony based on universal tolerance, the treatment given to Vedanta in modern works on philosophy is both inadequate and imperfect. It governs every detail of the inner lives of the Hindus whose conduct is permeated by its cardinal truths. The last consideration is as important as interesting. Whereas the greatest philosophers of Europe, owing to the abstruseness and the subtlety of their views, gained followers only among the intellectual sections of men, and whereas the thinkers themselves did not exhibit any noticeable difference in their own lives or actions as the result of their convictions, the Vedantic teachers supplied to the world simple but far-reaching doctrines within the capacity of the average intellect—doctrines that not merely stood the closest scrutiny but soothed the afflicted soul, reconciled the wretched to his lot, and conduced in general to open the springs of charity and beneficence in the hardest heart. And not merely that. The very lives of the Vedantins underwent a characteristic change. It served to banish pusillanimity and love of sensory joys in preference to duty and self-sacrifice. It drove out from their hearts all animality and installed in its place unstinted sympathy which knew of no barriers of human convention. The common people naturally flocked to the Sadhu, whose blessings were believed to bestow health and wealth upon his devotees. Poverty and privation no more frightened the Sadhu than wealth or position allured him. He was a spiritual hero in whose light the world throve. In the words of Carlyle they felt that it was well with them in his presence. The doctrines of Karma, of rebirth and of final emancipation, which are Vedanta's gifts to the suffering world, are as familiar to the man on the street as they are the articles of the deepest faith with the scholar. The pragmatic

value of Vedanta is thus unquestionable and its influence on human will and action unconfined.

There is a very light-hearted view, altogether erroneous, of Vedanta which may claim some notice. The Vedantins are looked upon as men who escape from the responsibilities of life and eschew the rigorous demands of duty. Their simplicity of life is explained as a necessity imposed by indolence and they are said to despise the delights which they cannot enjoy or procure. Besides, it seems dastardly to fly as they did from the arena of struggle, and seek inglorious security in the quiet recesses of forests and caves. That selfishness is reprehensible which makes men with high mental endowments to retire into seclusion in quest of individual salvation leaving their fellowmen weltering in ignorance and servitude exposed to all the ills that these necessarily breed.

We shall endeavour to show that the charges arrayed above against Vedanta and its votaries rest upon misapprehension due to a polar antagonism in ideals between the ancient Hindu sages and their modern critics. In these days of stress and strain in which human society has become a vortex of unmeaning, often aimless, efforts, except to secure the maximum of comforts to the individual or the community, in which every nation is on the watch to maintain its supremacy or independence, in which the poor labourer sweats for the benefit of the capitalist, the statesman for power, the scientist for fame and all for lucre, in which an innocent community because politically subordinate cannot welcome a scientific discovery lest it add to the means of turning down on it the screw of tyranny and oppression, in which even representatives of religion cannot overcome their bias against colour and birth,—in these days it comes with an ill grace from our lips, this unjust condemnation of the ancient Hindus, who sought seclusion only as the scientists now seek laboratories far deep in the country, for self-detachment as much as for the advancement of human knowledge. All the moral codes, the sacred scriptures, the systems of thought, the literary monuments, and the original works of a speculative or practical cast that were given to the world at the very dawn of civilisation, works by which Europe no less than Asia has unquestionably benefited directly or indirectly—these proceeded as the invaluable results of the restless labours of those men, who, alas, had voluntarily borne inclemencies of weather and privations of poverty with the sole object of spreading culture and enlightenment among all mankind. Selfishness at all events could not have been their besetting sin. Such an imputation is a libel on the holiest instincts of humanity.

But they sought their own spiritual salvation? Yes, to their glory they did. Where is the good of living the life of unthinking brutes engaged in gratifying the animal cravings and filling up the intervals with schemes and ambitions leading to a race for wealth and rank, oblivious of the sublime teaching of all the sages, that this mortal life does not stand by itself, does not end with itself, but carries with it evidences and implications that connect it with an endless past and an endless future? Man's tendency to act, his volitions, continue till the last moment of life, a fact showing that even the intervention of death cannot be a break in the life of the spirit. Our hopes, desires and plans employ the mind throughout life, and admit of no intelligible explanation, would be altogether meaningless if physical extinction involved also that of the spirit. Consciousness bears irrefutable testimony to the immortality of the soul. What then is the first duty of man, if not to realise his spiritual nature and to regulate this life so as to promote the interests of the spirit which knows of no beginning or end and which these prison walls of clay cannot bind? "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and to lose his own soul?" So said the great Soul of Bethlehem, whose teachings supply the pabulum on which are fed the millions of enlightened Europe and America. He that fails to realise his own higher nature commits a horrible suicide, the murder of his own soul. Such is the uncompromising verdict of the Upanishads.

Now granting that a man's duty is to develop his spiritual side, is it possible that the modern instrument of organization can serve the purpose? The triumphs of organization are indeed indisputable and endless in all spheres of human activity, but not without limit; and the concerns of the soul are that limit. Birth and death do not occur in company. Single is one born, single one dies. The ocean of illimitable, shoreless Life, a rising wave of which wafts man into this temporal world draws him back into itself at the subsidence of the wave. Gifted with intelligence and power for action, the human soul intended for a noble destiny would forfeit its birthright by neglecting the means of spiritual salvation, and abusing that most inestimable of all gifts, the gift of reason that elevates him to the rank of a deity. "In reason how like a God", exclaimed Shakespeare. "Ye are Gods", declare the Christian scriptures. And shall it be a sin to seek the salvation of one's own soul?

Yet this charge might in some measure be justified if the Hindu sages yearning for their spiritual emancipation had been indifferent to the interests of the unenlightened or had left behind them no clue

to the attainment of the highest end on the part of every eager soul. On the contrary, all the ordinances laid down by the ancient law-givers for the observance of society divided into sections on an economic as well as spiritual basis, all the teachings of Yoga and Vedanta, are the plain outcome of their deliberations and witness to their solicitude for the harmonious progress of society. Men who have conceived and enjoined rigid duties on the individual cannot have been unconscious of their importance or deficient in the sense of responsibility. Those whose works on secular and religious topics disclose their admiration for the beauties of nature, of the joys of life combined with compassion for the suffering, could not have been destitute of the æsthetic sense or the humanising faculty. Indolence and cowardice might spring up in towns where luxury and comforts abound, but are the last things to be looked for in the forest dwellers whose precarious living demanded unremitting exercise of muscle and nerve.

While the history of the philosophical systems of Europe shows that the popularity of each has been temporary and that the number of their adherents has dwindled away in the course of time, till later generations come to look upon them as speculative curiosities, while no Western school, even when it dominated contemporary thought, materially affected modes of Life or principles of action in general, the influence of Vedanta on its followers has been deep and lasting. Its truths have coloured the national ideals and aspirations, have insinuated themselves into every rite or ceremony and are the perennial sources of consolation and patience, of fortitude and hope. Endowed with eternal youth and fadeless lustre, Vedanta is the real soul of India, perhaps of the world.

There is a practical value of another sort that can be claimed for a study of Vedanta. The Hindu mind has developed through centuries of Vedantic traditions so that the secret springs of its action cannot be intelligible without it. To the foreign ruler it supplies the psychological leverage by which to reclaim violence and malice to the paths of peace and goodwill. To the Christian missionary who attempts to win over the Hindu to his faith, a sprinkling of Vedantic terms and notions will invest his doctrines with a more persuasive garb. Every one in fact who has, in carrying out the duties of his position, to persuade or convince individuals or masses, would find in it a holy instrument of the highest degree of efficacy, for it can tame the most obdurate heart, and unnerve the most aggressive,—appealing as it does to the deepest instincts of man. It supplies the key to the inner workings of the Hindu mind,

and in an educational course for young men, it ought to prove the highest intellectual and moral preparation for life.

Some people even among those that ought to know better often confound the Hindu religion with Vedanta although the former derives its vital sap from its relationship to it. But its outlook is comparatively narrow and its methods radically dogmatic, while Vedanta builds upon the fundamentals of human nature, excludes no class of facts from the purview of its investigation, and denies no community of men the benefits of its truth. Tolerance is its key-note and fanaticism simply cannot breathe its atmosphere and live.

As a humanising agency nothing is comparable to it. Even a superficial acquaintance with its doctrines and their adoption in a very dilute form are enough to tame the brute in man, to purify the emotions, to dispel fear and sorrow and to induce courage and confidence. It is not true that India was famous in history only for its wealth and beauty. That is but a half-truth, and such half-truths are ruinous. On the other hand she exercised a peculiar fascination on the rest of the world by her stores of spiritual wisdom and by her mystic culture. Great travellers visited India at different times to drink of the waters of eternal Life at the fountain-head, and even now the secrets of Vedanta are there for who may care for it, though, thank God, its guardian spirit will not unlock its treasures to every adventurer proud and presumptuous but only to those who approach it with humility and change of heart.

Vedanta has saturated all Hindu literature, Sanskrit, North-Indian and Dravidian. For its votaries are to be found in all parts of India, among all sections of people. It is the private property of no caste or denomination, and sages and saints are to be met with among non-Brahmins as among the Brahmins and universally honoured. Poets in the Dravidian and Sanskritic languages are popular only in proportion to their assimilation of Vedantic truths. Even the living poet of Asia owes the elusive sweetness of his effusions to the delicate touch of mysticism with which they are flavoured.

I shall briefly refer to some human instincts which are at the root of our thought and action and which cannot be explained without Vedanta. The imperfections of psychology and its inability to account for these instincts are a spontaneous testimony to its veracity. First, let me take the Law of Relativity. All are agreed that the human mind can think only in relations, and concepts as well as percepts must obey the laws of time, space and causality.

Yet, great men all over the world have believed in an Absolute, a Being without relations, who is somehow the Author of this universe or is the universe itself. Among these are Kant, Hegel, Plato and Aristotle. Bergson indeed believes in mere change and James has revolted against monistic superstition, but neither of these has a completed system of thought. while to the former, movement, change or duration is absolute and real. Every religion starts with an Absolute Being and is centred in a God, though none can rationally demonstrate His existence. How can we account for this wide-spread sentiment, religious or philosophic, which rebels against reason and relies on faith, except as due to an instinctive feeling that somehow we are the Absolute as Vedanta declares. Next let us consider the egoism in man, the self-love, the self-esteem and all forms of selfishness which everyone exhibits in a greater or smaller measure and which pervades all life and action. We rightly condemn selfishness but how did it originate? The explanation again is to be found in our instinct. We start life with love of self, because, says Vedanta, this self is Brahman, and nothing is sweeter than Brahman, which you cannot but love, but which you love blindly through the human body with which by ignorance you identify yourself. Every man believes in his own innocence because his Brahmanic instincts cannot allow of any stain on the purity of his own nature. Modern psychology must take note of the fact that without the aid of Vedanta every one of our deepest emotions would be an inexplicable enigma, such as hope, fear, hate, love, anger, ambition, sympathy, etc. The case of the scientist is by no means an exception. He seeks to find the one principle hidden behind the phenomena and would detect it through all its disguises. He does this under the unerring guidance of an assured belief based on instinct. Then again take the question of the soul's immortality. Most people would wish it were true, and are dissatisfied with any system that will not make this primary concession. Pessimism, nihilism, scepticism and atheism are never popular. Why? You may condemn what you do not like. But why do you condemn what you cannot oppose by reason, except because there is a higher reason based upon an instinct which is omnipotent, and which is rooted deeper in our nature than any other. Our love of freedom and impatience of subjection, individual or racial, our sense of the right to think and believe as we like, our zeal and even fanaticism in defence of such right, can bear no other comment. They all spring from that fundamental confusion of the real with the phenomenal to which Vedanta gives the most tender but at the same time the most expressive appellation, namely, Avidya or Nescience. The Vedantin

as the friend of humanity, kind and considerate, sees in every act of moral aberration, the one agency at work—Ignorance, Ignorance. Nothing can be more true.

The service that Vedanta renders to theology is incalculable. Irrespective of forms of faith which have in every case originated with some great personality, it supplies to each the unimpeachable evidence on which its belief in a God and its scheme of rewards and punishments can be justified. That Vedanta happens to have grown on the Indian soil is a circumstance that should not matter, for it is the Science of Reality on which spirituality ultimately rests. Every human soul has a right to it and cannot thrive without it. The apathy shown to Vedanta, therefore, by the followers of different religions would be incredible if it were not due to a misconception of its real nature.

Further, Vedanta has none of the dubious uncertainty, inseparable from philosophic speculations or logical abstractions. Its truths are based on human experience and their realisation is promised not in a region beyond death, but here and now, to all without exception. For it is a science, and like mathematics or physics its declarations are verifiable by immediate reference to facts of life. Its study cannot be confined to particular classes or individuals, but has been imposed as the first duty on everyone who has the desire and capacity for it—the only two qualifications demanded from the student.

Moreover, Vedanta requires on the part of its followers no change of religious forms which it leaves intact as the merely protective shell of truth. On the contrary, it helps one to understand the truths of his own religion by setting out the ground on which alone religious dogmas can stand, such as those of incarnation, sacrifice, sin, faith and future life. The value attached to Vedantic study in ancient India can to some extent be realised when we remember that it was considered indispensable to a right understanding of polity; and princes in their early years were taught the sublime doctrines of the Upanishads as a preliminary moral and spiritual discipline. Inspired by its ideals and imbued with a keen sense of duty, the rule of the ancient kings was marked by unselfish and impartial dispensation of justice tempered with mercy. Nevertheless, we should not conceal from ourselves the deplorable fact that we are fast falling off from Vedic ideals and the numbers are swelling of those arraying themselves under the standard of materialism. Charity is dwindling away to a vanishing point. And men thrive on mere *simulacra* of truth and virtue.

In spite of the wonders of self-confiding science, history warns us that when society falls into irreligion and vice, when temporal joys are preferred to the cultivation of virtue and to the dictates of justice and humanity, when men forget their spiritual interests and fail to fight out wickedness and suffering, every communal centre becomes a simmering volcano threatening eruptions, destructive of the very frame-work of society. Wars and catastrophes, with their sequel famine and pestilence, decimate the population and desolate the country. The power that supports this universe is *Truth*, the foe of pretence; and it is sure to assert itself in a terrible form, until a new era is inaugurated. Says Krishna in the Gita, "Whenever virtue declines and vice prevails, I incarnate myself for the resuscitation of Right and the extinction of Wrong." Millions of lives must have been lost in such world-cataclysms and there must have been a countless number of the latter. Not individuals alone but whole races that rioted in sensory joys and courted ignoble ease and pleasure, hopelessly perished; and many a civilization built on the sands of brute violence, sin and hypocrisy, were suddenly swept away by the advancing tide of Righteousness. Even our subjection to a foreign rule is the penalty we pay for our moral and spiritual degradation.

It may be urged that after all man occupies an insignificant position in this universe of stellar systems. What can the world-spirit care for the conduct or life of a creature on earth, which is itself a mere atom in the vast expanse of heaven? What are the achievements of man, his scientific appliances and political organizations, in the midst of the terrific, celestial cataclysms that hourly announce the birth of a star or the destruction of a planet? Where is the real basis for this homocentric pride which claims all the attention of God to man as the highest rational being in his own conceit?

Well, this is a view that ought to be disposed of before we can establish the claims of religion and Vedanta, and at the outset we shall admit its plausibility. But then it is only an external view, a view inevitable when we compare the universe around us with the obscure place that we individually or collectively occupy therein. Still what is the universe with its infinity of celestial spheres, its suns, planets and comets, and the nebulous region, which is the birth-place of stars? What is all this but an objective reflection in human Consciousness, and how can its existence be conceived by us except through the marvellous power of Consciousness which can take alike the tiniest object as well as the infinite whole into its field of perception, and handle them

with equal ease as objects ? The universe is great, but Consciousness is even greater, for it alone can grasp such a universe. It may be objected, Consciousness is only a condition of the body, a mere phenomenon appearing and disappearing under favourable or unfavourable circumstances. A hard blow on one's head makes him unconscious. During sleep and under the effects of narcotics, Consciousness vanishes. How can we advance it to the first rank of things that demand our study and attention ? This objection, however, arises from a misconception of the real nature of Consciousness, which it is more essential to our interests that we understand than the universe with its stars and milky way. For, what affects us immediately is not the celestial disaster that may at one time reduce the earth to ashes, but it is the notion of Reality which we entertain that shapes our conduct in life and enables us to rise to the conception of a unity that binds up the whole and tears off the mask of illusion from the face of nature. The size of the objective world or its resplendent glory is as nothing to man in comparison with one true notion or one act of kindness. Dumb nature has little to show that can excel man's triumphs in the spheres of the intellect, morality and religion.

It might be asked "what has Religion or Vedanta done to unravel the mystery that surrounds life and death? Who can prescribe a nostrum for mortality? The God of Death holds all life under its sway. He respects neither position nor age nor sex. His decrees are inexorable. At his bidding our activities however beneficent must come to an abrupt close. No wit of man can baffle him, no devices deceive him. Individuals, nations, civilizations must silently and inevitably yield to his power. Science boasting of her discoveries and inventions, religion laying a ban on the vanities of life, and philosophy claiming a higher place than either in man's esteem, all must confess to their impotency to deal with the great tyrant who is mightier than the mightiest, and whose kingdom is co-extensive with the realms of life. Religion indeed makes promises sweet to the imagination but she puts off the fulfilment till after death. "What may I do to escape death," cries helpless man. "Wait till you are dead and I shall hasten to your help," answers Religion! Science, proud of her past victories, modestly hopes that death may one day be numbered among her conquests. But cash she has none and only draws freely on the bank of fancy. Philosophy more pretentious in her aims is equally mute on the question of death and even feigns indifference to it. Meanwhile the founders of religions, the votaries of science and the pompous system-makers have all fallen undistinguished victims to the unsated voracity of the great God.

"Why, all the saints and sages who discussed
Of the two worlds so learnedly, are thrust
Like foolish prophets forth; their words to scorn
Are scattered and their mouths are stopt with Dust."

This objection levelled as it is against all religion and philosophy deserves careful consideration. It is based on a feeling of the ultimate futility of all enquiry transcending the immediate concerns, of life. It points to a radical pessimism haunting every mind, a pessimism regarded as inevitable, and repressed by being driven into the darker corners of the heart, so that its untimely appearance like Banquo's Ghost may not disturb the enjoyment of life. The highest heroism is taken to consist in a braving of death, and the deepest wisdom in avoiding all the reminders of it. The fear of death sometimes reacts adversely and gives rise to religious fanaticism, and implicit faith in a life of bliss succeeding death, which hardens the heart against the bitterness of inevitable extinction, and paralyses the natural tendencies so as to make the victim eagerly court dissolution. The religious frenzy of the common mob is to be so accounted for. Men displaying utter impatience of life and contempt for its pleasures are put into the class of sages, worthy of worship. Alas, for human judgment! Aversion to that life which opens to us the great volume of Nature, in which we recognise the awful presence of the Absolute Being, is elevated into a virtue, merely because death is a monster that has otherwise to be reckoned with and no religion or philosophy can dispose of the ugly fact. Thanks to the natural instincts of man, life is still found sweet and loveable, though it may abound never so much in ills of every description. But none can fully enjoy the present without reference to a future life.

But that is not to answer the question, which should agitate the minds of all. Nothing is more certain than death. Nothing more welcome than life everlasting,—a real happy life which never ends, and not a mere perpetuation of the physiological functions of the body, for without the glory of conscious bliss it is a mere Death in Life. But neither religion nor philosophy whose promises and speculations are confined to this life unsupported by real after-death experiences can suggest a key to the problem of death. All the realistic description or depiction of heavenly joys, the meeting of parted souls, the eternal reunion of lovers and children, the incomparable beauty of life in the presence of the Heavenly Father—these serve to comfort the expectant fancy of the pious and the afflicted with eager hopes. But this balm is traceable to no higher source than the fervent imagination of some well-

meaning man, the founder of a religion, whose pure life and generous intention made his words bear the stamp of irresistible truth. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of the most enlightened find by self-scrutiny that their case is by no means an exception and that their only hope is in faith and that to seek to discover its rational basis will only end in cold scepticism. So deep-rooted is our belief in a God and our love of immortality that when reasons cannot justify both we advance faith to a higher place because it gratifies our deepest feeling. Testimonies or dogmatic statements are readily accepted if only plausible. We stand to gain by belief. At all events we can lose nothing. This is the frame of mind in which most men like even Pascal are content to view the matter. This again is the Brahmic instinct that assumes the guise of faith. We may pass over the attitude of the unthinking multitude who have no attitude seriously taken up and whose unvaried biographies may be briefly summed up in the words: working, struggling, propagating, suffering and dying.

What is the solution furnished by Vedanta? What are her pretensions? What can she offer, with what guarantees? There are various schools among Hindus, all claiming to be orthodox, all basing their doctrines on the Upanishads, and all entitled thus to be treated as Vedantic, namely, the Advaitic, the Dvaitic, the Visishtadvaitic, the Shuddhadvaitic, the Viseshadvaitic, etc. But as none of these except the first undertakes to equip us with the means of vanquishing death, and as their promise of reward is to take effect after death, to which their followers must unmurmuringly submit as inevitable, I propose to consider in this book only the position of the Advaitin, who boldly proclaims immortality and beatitude as the instantaneous fruits of Knowledge. Vedanta is throughout taken in the sense of the Vedic monism.

While all pure or theological speculations naively confess their inability to suggest a means of overcoming death and the latter freely enlarge on the joys of a state admittedly subsequent to death, Vedanta takes up an extraordinary position, puts forward extravagant claims and holds out astounding promises. It raises hopes of Release in this life, release occurring as soon as Knowledge dawns—release from the bonds of ignorance. Its root-doctrine is that the spirit of man is embodied not in fact but in fancy, and since death can affect only him who has a body, it is powerless over one who realises the truth about his own nature, viz., that he is identical with the Universal Spirit, the highest reality, and as such is raised, in his essence, above the phenomenal, is ever free and is Immortal Bliss. The methods employed and the evidences adduced

to arrive at this conclusion are peculiar to Vedanta and its tone is one of positive certainty rather than of ambiguity or doubt. It shall be our aim in the following pages to examine this position in detail, and endeavour to find if its lofty pretensions can bear a rational scrutiny and whether any real good can arise from the acceptance of its doctrines.

Of one thing we can be certain. The assertions of Vedanta are both unequivocal and clear. "The Brahman to whom Death is a condiment." "The Knower becomes immortal here in this life," "That thou art," "I am Brahman," "Pure Consciousness is Brahman", "This self is Brahman," "All this is Brahman surely," "There is not the least multiplicity here." Bold and audacious as these dicta may seem and though they may run counter to our conviction that no truth can be accepted as final, Sankara the great thinker and exponent of Vedanta is not afraid of taking these words at their face value and demonstrating their veracity by arguments and illustrations which are most interesting from more than one point of view. First, they are strictly confined to the region of reason and experience, and, next, they do not derive their force or aptness from mere tradition or authority. As expounded by him Vedanta can take religion under its protecting wings and give a scientific sanction to its tenets and promises investing devotional morality with a special significance. It places within the reach of the humblest that undecaying happiness, the peace of the soul, which riches cannot buy, and in the light of which this life is irradiated with a joy unspeakable. According to Sankara Life includes birth and death and so transcends both. Vedanta lifts us to the spiritual plane from which to comprehend this view of Life. Thus it is a critique of Life in all its aspects, inculcating the truth that reveals Life as far beyond the slings and arrows of Death. It is Truth and Bliss combined.

Whatever might be the *prima facie* impressions that such claims may engender, there are considerations that ought to dispose us to give them a hearing with patience and sympathy, and to examine them with judicial impartiality and without prepossessions. For the school has had a long life in its favour. It has come from dim antiquity and is sanctified to some extent by this circumstance. Taking its birth in the forests, nursed by sages, patronised by kings, it has been adored by all as the unfailing balm for the afflicted soul. It is the life-breath of Hindu saints, and its truths are the culmination of Hindu hopes and aspirations. It has given comfort to the stricken heart, courage to the distressed soul; it has raised the fallen, strengthened and supported the weak, delivered

the suffering from the clutches of oppression, and fed the ascetic with the ambrosia of its truth, branding vice on the brow and crippling the limbs of tyranny. The Divine Song into which the essence of the great epic has shot up is sung by millions of souls with unsurpassed fervour and with indelible satisfaction. The Ramayana, its sister epic, though scarcely touching the holy ground of Vedanta, purely confining itself as it does to the spheres of morality and religion, yet soars in its sublime flights to the highest peaks of Vedanta. Even the Puranas become respectable in proportion to the element of Vedanta prevailing in their teachings.

An objection is likely to rear up its head. After extolling the virtues of Vedanta in unmeasured terms it is ridiculous if not impudent to offer such a solution of the problem of Death. Birth and death are forsooth illusions, and a man conquers death so soon as he knows this. Well, the doctrine can adorn the pages of a Cervantes. Common sense however is bound to reject it with scorn. We see men being born and dying. To say that all this is unreal simply takes one's breath away. Now, Vedanta admits that birth and death are real occurrences in life, and that no traveller has returned from the bourne of Death. But this is so from one point of view. While religion puts off the experience of everlasting life till one has paid one's debt to nature and while one has only to be exercising one's faith meanwhile, Vedanta, which depends for its credibility neither on its antiquity nor on authority, promises immediate emancipation from the fetters of ignorance, which certainly demands greater courage. The casualties of life are no doubt real as commonly believed. To be convinced of its glamorous nature, nevertheless, one has to change one's angle of vision, and Vedanta provides the right angle. It does not simply dogmatise or idly assert. By placing the enquirer in the right position it makes him see that its statements are true.

In lonely cells, in obscure corners of cities, in wayside huts, on secluded river banks, in the thick of the forests, or the recesses of caves, on the top of hills, or in dilapidated temples, the enlightened sage is found in India, ill-clad and unassertive, contemplating with delight the grand beauties of Nature and losing his individuality in the bliss of self-oblivion. The rustics around supply his few wants and receive his benedictions. Do not let us say that his life is a waste, for he is the centre of spiritual influences which sublimate the life of the rude peasant, and subdue the beast in man. The polished citizen up to his eyes in business without leisure for spiritual culture may imagine that his activities contribute more to the well-being of the land, whereas

this only betrays his selfishness and vanity which the world can well spare.

On the contrary, to love wealth beyond need or utility and to devote a whole life to the amassing of riches for its own sake is a malady to which, alas, man alone, along with a wasteful excess of learning and intelligence, is pitiably liable of all God's creatures. For when the tumult of short-lived excitement should cease and grim Death has to be faced, neither riches nor royalty can supply hope or ensure mercy after the panorama of life shall have rolled away from the vision of the dying.

In many respects we are living in better times than our immediate forefathers and enjoy a balance of advantages over those that were within their reach. There is apparently a settled government with a definite constitution calculated to ensure peace and plenty. Person and property are safe. Courts administer justice, and laws protect or ought to protect the poor and the weak against the ravages of power and affluence. Progress in Science is slowly stamping out malignant diseases and the term of average life, thanks to her efforts, is steadily increasing. Man and woman have honourable fields of work, and lucrative employments are open to merit and character. Freedom of thought and action is assured to every individual. Education is fast spreading. The whole country is in a ferment of patriotic impulses to secure every benefit of democratic institutions. Conveniences of life have become cheap and common. Everybody is coming to feel his power to control the machinery of the State. In the midst of real blessings like these there is one serious drawback in our march towards national perfection. The most enlightened, the most leisured and the most wealthy classes are so narrow in their outlook that their cares and interests never extend beyond the present life. They are so busy in a sense that they have no time left for the concerns of the soul. What are his highest achievements to a man who makes his exit from the field of his glory without the faintest notion of whence he came or whither he goes. Even self-interest demands a knowledge of one's own nature and of the Reality underlying it. This need is so imperative that it is hard to conceive how a rational being can possibly be indifferent to it. When a man is asked to do anything he naturally reflects how it will profit him. That is so because he unconsciously and rightly assumes that the self is the central point to which all action must have ultimate reference. How, then, can his neglect of the science of the Self be justified? "There is a lack of proportion," says Mr. A. N. Widgery in his 'Contemporary Thought of Great Britain,'

"in estimating the value of what goes to make up life. With the affirmation of the reality of spiritual values in a wider and enduring existence, attention is occupied and energy employed chiefly in the acquirement of the relatively insignificant. . . . What seems to strive for expression is a need to find one's place in a whole wider than this earthly existence. Even from an intellectual point of view it is becoming more and more forced upon us that this existence with its culture does not form a satisfying unity. Three score years and ten, a little more or a little less, of such culture does not satisfy the deeper demands of human nature."

Meanwhile the voices of the past keep ringing in our ears. "You have a past and a future, the present is but a short stage between two unknowns; and to be understood, it should be joined to the previous and subsequent stages. The greatest potentate is but the creature of a moment. He cannot realise his higher nature unless with humility and devotion he succeeds in connecting the link of his present life with the other links of the whole chain of Reality. Let no one say, 'I cannot understand philosophy, I do not care for it.' This is a fallacious position, since philosophy deals with one's own self and since none is in deeper love with anything else.

We are apt to imagine that our ancestors living in crude ages, when Science was not born and comforts of life were limited, deserve our pity and compassion. On reflection, however, we shall discover that it is we that are not sensible of our best interests, and live mechanical lives which in our saner moments we should not approve. Our shrewdness and our discernment stop at the gate of Death, and the region beyond is one of dark despair unillumined by a single ray of heart or hope. Is this complimentary to our scientific advancement? Yama asks Yudhishtira, "What is the greatest wonder in life?" The latter readily replies, "Day by day, souls enter the abode of Yama, still the survivors believe that they are immortal. What can surpass this?" The remark applies to the wisest of us to-day as it did to the men that lived more than two thousand years ago. The ideal of the ancient sages is laconically indicated in the names they have given to the Supreme Being: *Kalakala*, the vanquisher of Death or Time; *Trinetra*, the three-eyed, one eye for each of the three States; *Tripurantaka*, the demolisher of the three abodes of Maya, or the Avasthas; *Purusha*, the one that abides within the city of the human body; *Trivikrama*, one who measures the three States by three steps. Here we see how the profoundest truths are inter-twined with theological beliefs. With this we pass to the Hindu religion.

The Hindus have devised their religion worthy of their Vedanta, a religion that rests on no single personality. Like a cut diamond of the first water it has a hundred facets, a hundred sides: the mythological, the epic, the ritual, the devotional, the intellectual, the Yogic, the Tantric, the spiritual, and so on, suited to the taste or capacity of every man. Each side has a core of the highest Truth and shines in its own peculiar lustre. Hinduism is a brilliant, shining in many colours. Jesus set out the truth in simple parables for the fishermen and the artisans. Hinduism has similarly woven wonderful myths for the common people, while it has provided the intellectuals with profound thought-systems. Its solicitude for souls at every stage of growth is patent in its adaptation of its doctrines to the needs of the particular individual. With a marvellous insight into the variety of human nature, the teachings of the Hindu sages have been graduated so as to satisfy every degree of intelligence. Even in the crudest forms of idolatry, truth occupies the central place, and as Sri Krishna says, "No true devotee is left to perish!" Hinduism is an inimitable mosaic. Foreigners might puzzle over its Protean forms, but there is a vital principle and an order preserved through all. To call Hinduism the mother of religions is by no means a misnomer. It feeds the soul with the nectar of immortality as no other religion can. Deussen rightly observes that there are only two paths that Life offers to man, that of knowledge and that of suffering. He that chooses not the former will necessarily be driven into the other, till after repeated incarnations the wearied soul is forced to choose the path of wisdom which puts an end to all suffering and leads to bliss everlasting.

Some people hold that religion and philosophy served a purpose at a certain stage of evolution and as we reach the higher stages of progress, they become defunct and mere drags. These are the Positivists. We shall in the sequel show that far from having become effete, these are ever indispensable to man's well-being, and that while the truths of evolution may some time come to be questioned, those of Vedanta shall be eternally valid.

Vedanta is often stigmatised as *Mayavada*, the theory of illusion, as a view that juggles one out of one's common sense, and works the ruin of the human soul. Sankara is represented as a Mayavadin whose doctrines are pernicious and whose teachings spell danger to the entire human race. This of course is the opinion of the common people to whom any presentation of truth in a form different from how crude life presents it, is suspicious and frightful. Every school of thought, modern or ancient, should

be repulsive to these abhorrors of intellectual exertion. Realism and Idealism are alike unacceptable because both condemn the vulgar view of perceptual reality. Pantheism is a dread because it is beyond the understanding of the mob. When Emerson says that the soil, the plough and the ploughman are one, it strikes them as utterly ridiculous, for a state in which all distinctions are abolished is a state inconceivable and therefore impossible. How can a man identify himself with God, and call his belief a religion? Well, Vedanta can rightly claim infallibility for its doctrine of Maya. For what is it but Maya that makes men, accounted learned and wise, hold directly opposed views in religion and philosophy and regard their opponents with suspicion and horror, often with implacable hatred? But Kali is the age of spiritual bankruptcy in which spiritually our resources are at their ebb, when we live from hand to mouth and reck not what is to come; only we tenaciously cling to sweet life, though it must soon slip away from us as a rattle from the sleeping babe.

To understand Maya, let us for a brief moment consider the ironies of life sometimes so heart-breaking. They are enough to arrest the attention of the thoughtful and make them realise that this is not the final state of things. At the back of all joys and sorrows, at the back of all activities, at the back of change and movement, there is a something that remains invisible without which this life of triumph and discomfiture, of hopes and fears were nought, were worse than the antics of insanity or the flightiness of dreams. We feel that this life is incomplete, is not self-sustained, and that there must be a spiritual background which gives it a reality and a significance far beyond the shabby succession of facts. There is no intellectual impluse, no poetry, no humanity, and certainly no art or morality in a man whose interest or curiosity does not extend beyond the mere animal in him, or beyond such temporal concerns as tend to confirm the brute in him. If a man should be content to remain untouched by the elevating influences of the nobler aim and the wider outlook of Vedanta, let us leave him severely alone to be fooled by life's glamour. He knows not, alas, that in the very midst of his conclusions he might suddenly stumble and fall, to rise no more.

A few instances of the grim irony that pervades life may be enough to show that we must seek elsewhere for a key to its mystery and frightfulness. Napoleon, the historical comet, rose from the ranks to be the arbiter of the destinies of nations, and faded away into a melancholy figure pining on a remote island till death

put an end to his woes and disgrace. Alexander, the Great, whose misery was that there were no new worlds to conquer, caught his death at last in a river bath. The great Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian Empires have shrunk into a historical fiction. The unmistakable finger-prints of Maya shine on them all. Even in our daily lives the ironies that we witness would be incredible were they not so common. Doctors die of diseases for which they invented unfailing cures. Marriage is sought by the bachelor, while the married seek divorce. The labourer craves employment but soon it galls and grieves. Riches brings no health or offspring, learning and piety, no affluence. Mediocrity obtains renown while talent and merit languish. The king wields the state while the parasite wields the king. Impudence receives applause and modesty is elbowed out of sight. Power oppresses and Mammon hardens the heart. Towns and cities are over-run with noxious weeds more than maiden forests, and society all but in show, destined to worthier ends, is slowly but steadily advancing to an inglorious goal, the goal of spiritual and moral death. There are moments in which every reflective man depressed by sorrow or elevated by joy feels, "Is this all true or a mere dream?" What is this but Maya? To reclaim humanity from its grip is the aim and purpose of Vedanta.

Besides, being the Science of Reality, Vedanta has given rise to a code of morals for every stage of life and has laid down rules for the regulation of rituals, sacrifices and meditations, which proves that it has not omitted the practical side of life. We may doubt the efficacy of the methods inculcated for the realisation of our desires and might rather rely upon modern means and appliances with greater assurance. But there are instances in which Vedic prayers have been attended with amazing results, when all human efforts had failed. Shall it be wrong if in such cases men resort to Vedic methods of averting evil or securing good? Who can gainsay the power of faith under the circumstance? Under modern conditions we cannot judge if the famed powers of the Rishis were real or exaggerated. But that infinite good may come from subjecting ourselves to their methods of discipline on account of its intrinsic excellence, I do not entertain the least doubt. Piety and self-denial are spiritually high potentials.

Hence, although we cannot revive old conditions or the old faith in the efficacy of Vedic prayers we should be unjust to Vedanta if we believed that it encouraged inaction or ignored duties. The scheme of life as conceived by the sages filled every hour or half-hour with appropriate duties adapted to every stage of life, age or sex; and provided for a harmonious progress of society towards

the ultimate goal which was identically the same for all living beings without exception.

A student of Western philosophy might remark that after all Vedanta is only Monistic Idealism, and Hegel's Absolute Idealism is the last word on it. Now, Idealism is of course a triumph of the intellect over the naive reports of the senses but it cannot claim to have vanquished Realism, as room is still left for the latter to posit, however dogmatically, an external substratum for the percept. Hegel contrives to rise above the subject and the object to a self-consciousness transcending both. But this is only a logical necessity, necessity of the laws of thought, and can never attain to the rank of a truth rooted in a fact of life and experience comprehending the three States. In the next place, it cannot influence conduct, satisfy emotions, explain evil or support faith. It has nothing to say on the fruit of knowledge or the penalty of ignorance. Further, Life is to it a sealed book. Hence the peculiar value of Vedanta. Superficial observers might confound the one with the other, but they differ fundamentally as speculation and direct realisation ever must.

The Upanishads are the repository of spiritual treasures. It is the paramount duty of the Hindus to preserve them, for they are an invaluable heirloom. But this can be done only by making their study compulsory in every course of liberal culture. It has been left to a few foreign scholars to appreciate their worth while the Hindu unconscious of their merits has his ideas deeply dyed in the borrowed colours of the West.

We shall now briefly mention the ethical and intellectual preparation that ought to precede a fruitful study of Vedanta. In these democratic days no special claims are recognised, and everyone is assumed to have an equal right to be admitted into the temple of wisdom. This right may be freely conceded, but as natural endowments do not happen to be equal, individuals must differ in capacity and aptitude for any course of study. In the dilettantish fashion in which Vedanta is treated now-a-days, we do not take into account the spiritual and intellectual equipment of the student, probably because modern courtesy would not call them in question on the part of anyone. Facts, however, belie the presumption, with the result that for one earnest student whose labours have been profitable, we meet with a hundred dabblers who learn just enough to quote phrases and maxims but not enough to exhibit their smallest influence on life, belief or conduct. A ruinous impression has thus gained ground that Vedanta is only for idle hours and that it has no bearing on practical Life.

Admitting capacity and inclination as the indispensable qualifications, in general, we shall now enquire what are the special equipments that the science demands. Before all there must be the natural *temperament* without which the student can make no headway, and the absence of which cannot be compensated by gifts of understanding or by austerities. In the next place, a man must be able to *discriminate* between the spheres of the ego and the non-ego, of the self and the non-self. A nebulous conception of the two opposed elements of knowledge will create unending confusion, making it impossible for the student to realise the aim and scope of Vedanta. Hence this fundamental distinction or *discrimination* is rightly stressed at the very start. Thirdly, the student must bring a *detached* mind with him. If he cannot for the time being shake off all other cares, and concentrate on the subject with a single-minded devotion and sincere desire, like the scientist or the mathematician, the subject cannot touch even the fringe of his interests. This is the minimum quantity of *renunciation* which the study pre-supposes, viz., complete mental absorption in it. Fourthly, one must really *desire* to break the fetters of ignorance and be released from its hold. One should not simply toy with it. Either one values the truth or one does not. No good will come of a make-belief, especially in a matter that concerns the well-being of the soul. Fifthly and lastly, there is a set of six moral and psychic *disciplines* which must precede the quest of reality, without which no success can be looked for:

Shama: A calm mind that does not wander.
Dama: Control of the senses, celibacy and continence.
Uparati: Self-denial, and concentration of mind.
Shraddha: An unbiassed or receptive mind with an earnest regard for the Vedic learning.
Titiksha: Repression of self, with forbearance and forgiveness.
Samadhana: The practice of undisturbed meditation.

Thus the study of Vedanta, at the very inception, proceeds on an inevitable moral basis. To fear a lapse, after the course is completed and the truth is realised, is an unwarranted and wanton resurrection of the dead and ceremonially buried. For the enlightened is established in truth, the head-spring of ethics.

Frail is the bark in which man sets out on his voyage of Life. He is constantly exposed to tempestuous winds and waves, while the rocks lurking beneath demand his utmost skill and vigilance. False hopes springing from worldly advantages cannot save him from a final ship-wreck, and the most gifted soul must sink and perish without the strong faith and keen vision of Vedanta.

CHAPTER I: THE SYSTEM OF VEDANTA

VEDANTA differs from other thought-systems in its method which is peculiar to itself. While philosophical speculation dogmatises on the basis of Waking experience exclusively, and theology upon faith and scriptures, they both agree in confining the application of reason to the facts of Waking life. Empirical sciences are limited bothways: externally by the smallest object, an electric atom, internally by the subject or the ego. They cannot pass beyond psychology and physics. Vedanta alone considers Life in all its aspects, in our Sleeping, Dreaming and Waking conditions, and succeeds in detecting the Absolute Reality which underlies all the manifestations of Life and which is identical with Life in its widest sense. The peculiarity of the Vedantic method is clearly acknowledged by Mr. Widgery as follows: "With the recent increase in the literature on the subject of Indian philosophy, there is hope that the attention of British philosophical thinkers will be attracted. In spite, however, of the increase in opportunities for gaining information on oriental philosophy, it will be properly appreciated only if its methods are understood. These are not of the same type as those of a philosophy based on the principles of a theory of knowledge of the world of physical science. Only if the fundamental attitude and the methods are understood is it likely that oriental thought will be able to help us to remedy defects in our own thought."

Although the source of Vedanta is the Vedic portion known as the Upanishads, it cannot be maintained that the rest of the Vedas is altogether devoid of references to the Vedantic truth, as unmistakable suggestions of the latter are met with in surprising abundance in portions avowedly devoted to *Works.* The Upanishads, however, form a compendium, as it were, of the teachings bearing on Brahman or the highest Reality.

It must not be imagined that the fact that the Vedas contain the germs of Vedanta should make the latter depend for its acceptability on the authority of the Vedas, or that Vedanta cannot

appeal to or concern those who care not to acknowledge that authority. On the contrary, Vedanta as the science of Reality makes no assertions incompatible with reason or unverifiable by experience. It demands no blind allegiance to any sect or school, and respects no traditions or biblical authority in its search after truth. Its statements are plain and its inferences are drawn from unimpeachable facts within the experience of every human being. To ignore its worth simply because it is ancient, is an aberration of mind, which visits itself with the consequences of its own folly.

Life presents three independent aspects commonly recognised as the three states of the soul, viz., Waking, Dream and Deep Sleep. A notion of Reality derived from the observation of the Waking consciousness alone must be necessarily imperfect and hence involve endless contradictions. Our knowledge obtained by intuition of the other two states should be placed side by side with that of our waking experience to ensure its correctness. Vedanta has done this in its own inimitable manner, and claims for its dictum both infallibility and finality. It will be our task to examine its claims and determine how far they can be admitted.

We commonly assume that all Reality is presented to us in our Waking mood and that Sleep and Dream, though unavoidable, are but appendages to our Waking life, contributing next to nothing to our understanding of Life. The world is the grand fact evolving itself every moment, bringing into birth innumerable living beings which flourish for a time and perish in the end. A human being is but one among them. How can his Sleep and Dream help to unravel the mystery that surrounds him? Besides, what is Sleep but a temporary inactivity of the brain and the sensory organs, and what is Dream but a partial, fantastical disturbance of the nervous system? No, says Vedanta. You misjudge. You are too partial to the Waking, and unjust in subordinating the other states to it. You start with a bias when you explain Sleep and Dream in terms of the Waking intellect. Sleep is anterior to Waking, and Dreams occur at the intermediate stage. The child when it is born is released from the hold of sleep and is gradually handed over to the care of the Waking consciousness. During the early years of infancy the baby sleeps longer than it is awake, and cries as soon as it awakes, as if it discovered itself suddenly thrust into a condition alien to its nature. Its Dreams are contentless till the child is able to translate them into the language of Waking experience. As the child grows older, the value of Deep Sleep is more and more appreciated, and in old age Waking life receives less regard, till the decrepit old man

imperceptibly glides into the arms of Death, the grim brother of Sleep.

Our Waking consciousness presents the antithesis of subject and object, of self and non-self, of the ego and the non-ego; and the Dream consciousness does the same, with this difference, that while permanent reality is by us conceded to the former, the latter is dismissed as mere phantasmagoria. As to Sleep, no philosopher has hitherto attached any real significance to it except as it may be necessary for health. The spiritualists indeed refer to a sub-consciousness functioning in mesmeric sleep and the mediums are supposed to behave as if they had temporarily lost their sense of individual identity, easily assuming any individuality suggested. Psychical science may advance, revealing layer after layer of consciousness in the same person, either active or inactive, even in mesmeric sleep; but the aim of spiritualism is only to explain the phenomena of Waking life and not to discover its ultimate basis. In the light of Vedanta these endeavours are futile as they proceed from a fundamental error that underlies them, viz., that the Waking life is the only reality.

THE FULL VIEW OF LIFE

The problem of deriving the Self and non-Self from an ulterior entity, or of deriving the one from the other, remains as insoluble as ever. If this multiplex, mysterious World with its duality of good and evil, of pleasure and pain, of beauty and ugliness, of love and hatred, of life and death could satisfy the intellectual and emotional cravings of the human mind, a naive pluralism would be the last word in philosophy. But pluralism explains nothing, reveals nothing, and condemns the higher philosophical effort as destined to end in despair. Still, there is the undying human instinct, working incessantly in all men, forcing us to rise above the limitations of the phenomenal view, to rise to a Unity behind the Appearance, and we cannot, notwithstanding our repeated failures, refrain from making a fresh attempt to attain to that Unity. The race of philosphers will never become extinct although the practical-minded, those that are out for exploiting the present life to the utmost, may regard them with a thin sneer playing on their lips.

What then is the Self, and its correlate, the non-Self? In other words, what am I? And what is this World that I perceive? The Self no doubt appears in Waking to be inseparable from its associates, the mind and the body, except intellectually. Many have thus come to doubt if a Self can exist by itself. Life, however,

shows that the Self is really an independent entity maintaining itself in both Sleep and Dream, and that what sees, hears, thinks, resolves and enjoys is really beyond the senses and the mind. It is the substrate of all the rest. The Self is not a mere abstraction, as it would be if our view was circumscribed by Waking. In its nature it freely takes on the associates or dispenses with them. But the ordinary view—the view of most men who have bestowed very little thought upon the question—is that the World is an entity whose beginning is inconceivable and unknown, and in the midst of which I find myself at my birth, departing from it once for all at death. Thus my life-career may be compared to the movement of a point in the infinity of time which circumvents me on both sides of my life. The term of my life extending over a few years is as nothing compared with the eternal duration of the World in which I took my birth. How can I, a mere short-lived atom, take the exact measurements of a World which spreads backwards and forwards through infinite time? My theory of the World and of its origin must necessarily be of the nature of a mere speculation, according to the capacity of my intellect. But even my intellect cannot pass beyond the limits of Time and Space, and I must remain content with such notions as are acceptable to me under human conditions.

Now, Vedanta has a peculiar mode of dealing with the problem of the World, which is the crux of all philosophical systems. That the idea of the World as perceived by us is partly determined by our organs of perception, viz., the intellect and the senses, is a fact now commonly accepted by all European thinkers, especially after Kant. But that the percept is strictly and invariably a mere concomitant of the Waking consciousness is the Vedantic view unrecognized by the rest. What is known as the World, including our body, comes and goes with our Waking. A World by itself, that is, as divorced from Waking, is a chimera. Our imagination which can combine, distort and separate images with a lordly contempt of Logic or Reality, cuts off the World from the Waking consciousness with which it is inseparably bound, and presents it as an entity by itself for our contemplation. This it does by virtue of a power which enables it to connect the events of life, a power which is so indispensable for the practical concerns of Waking life. But none the less it is illusive; for, under its influence we not only believe in the reality of the World spread out before us, which is natural, but carry on the belief illogically beyond the legitimate limits of the Waking consciousness. The continuity of the World from

its inception to its dissolution, that is, for all time, assumes the continuity of the Waking consciousness, and all questions relating to the World must necessarily fall within the sphere of Waking.

It may be asked, does not the World comprehend all Reality? Why then do you restrict the World to the Waking state? The World does go on existing uninterruptedly through all our individual states whether Waking or Sleeping. Now this belief rests itself on what may be called the mono-basic bias. Our notion of Life, instead of being based on the triad of the states, Waking, Sleep and Dream, is derived solely from a consideration of the Waking. The Vedantic interpretation of Life, on the other hand, being tri-basic is all-inclusive and perfect. Hence it is free from all the illusion arising from partial views. Of the World which is the non-Self we can take but an external view, while of Sleep and Dream we must necessarily take the internal view made possible not by perception but by intuition alone. Besides, the World, howsoever we may conceive it, cannot include the perceiving consciousness which always kicks back from itself every object presented to it, thus taking up a position of uncompromising opposition to it. To say hence that the World includes Consciousness is to mistake their very nature. In order to attain to a comprehensive view, the opposition of subject and object should be transcended in a higher unity. Our organs of perception, suited only to an outside view of things, are unavailing when we propose to study the states of Sleep and Dream. Yet these are states unquestionably real as experienced by all, and can be known to us immediately only through our intuition. The knowledge thus acquired is afterwards thrown into the forms of the intellect and we naturally conclude that it originates from the intellect. Vedanta presses individual intuition also into its service and builds up an impregnable system with the materials gathered from the experience of the three states—a system of Truth and Reality which no mono-basic view can overthrow.

CHANGE AND CHANGELESSNESS

But the World is mere movement, change. There are no real states. Change is unceasing and uninterrupted. The static appearance of things is an illusion created by the intellect, while Life is activity and knowledge is for action. Real time is duration, which is existence through change. Even consciousness is change. When change ceases, consciousness ceases. Thus the whole of Reality can be reduced to one principle, the principle of

change. The past is not gone, but with its accumulated force ever presses on the present and creates the future. Creation is incessant. Mind and Matter are but opposed movements. Such is the view of Bergson, which may now be considered in the light of Vedanta.

It may be stated at the outset that Vedanta is prepared to go the whole length required by the philosophy of change, but within the limits of Waking consciousness. For, duration which is the ground-work of the system in the sense of existence by means of change, can be neither felt, observed, nor cognised in any other manner in Deep Sleep, and what may be felt or perceived in Dream is not taken as real and does not admit of being reduced to the terms of the Waking consciousness. When we say, "I slept for two hours," or "I slept very long," we palpably refer only to the standard of Waking time or to the feeling of duration familiar to our Waking experience. Sleep is precisely the condition from which feeling and sensation are almost entirely banished. Moreover, the averment that, really, there is no changeless state is likewise true, only with reference to the Waking World.

Though it may be conceded that empirical life presents no real states, we must admit that Waking and Sleep are two actually opposed states with distinct characteristics, and the one can by no manner of means be conceived to interpenetrate or blend with the other. Sleep obliterates all the marks of Waking and *vice versa.* Time being abolished in Sleep, it is not correct to say that at some point of time in Sleep the state is preparing to change into Waking; and Waking even when at dullest cannot conceive sleep. When we compose ourselves to sleep, our feeling and sensations become fainter and duller, our volitions gradually cease, but so long as we only feel sleepy, we are really awake. Further, this feeling is the effect of the senses gradually foregoing to function, which is taken note of by the intellect so long as the latter is active. But when the intellect is in its turn shutting up, we become slowly unconscious of feeling or sensation, and sleep comes when the process is completed. Hence at no stage of waking or sleeping can we imagine the presence of the characteristics of the one in the other. In other words, we cannot wake and sleep simultaneously, for the two conditions are radically opposed. A man bound to keep watch standing may, overpowered by nature, just shut his eyes and dream. When he wakes the next moment, he may wonder how he was in an instant transported to his distant home. In this case which is no uncommon experience, it is after going into sleep, for however short a period, that he was able

to dream, since no one can dream while broad awake. Sleep overtook him in spite of himself and it is lost labour to discover by means of the intellect the nature of the state which occurs only after all intellection has been extinguished. As to the transition from Dream to Waking it is so sudden and so instantaneous, that the intellect feels its powers altogether crippled to explain the change. Hence it must be concluded that Deep Sleep, Dream and Waking are three distinct and independent states, each with its peculiar characteristics and each implying the absence of the other two, though—and this must be remembered—Pure Consciousness as the witness is invariably present in all. For it would be impossible for a man to refer these states to himself if Pure Consciousness as their invariable basis were not presupposed.

One might urge that since Waking is succeeded by the other states, change is continuous and that nothing is gained by the Vedantic mode of procedure. Not so, replies the Vedantin. Sleep and Waking *seem* to succeed each other, but sequence demands a continuous basis of time. Waking ends when Sleep begins, but continuity of time would imply the persistence of the Waking consciousness.

It would in passing be profitable to enquire in greater detail into the system of Bergson which receives the fervent support of James. With a speculative daring, originality and learning truly admirable, he has contributed some new ideas to metaphysics. Reality is movement and is not given once for all in experience, but creatively evolves through all time. The World is not what is made but what is for ever in the making. Intellectual concepts do not partake of movement, do not live and develop as an organism. Hence no concept that does not recognise the perceptual flux and perpetual movement which characterise Life can lead to ripe metaphysics. Time and duration are integral parts of Life or rather Life itself, but philosophy, hitherto unduly intellectualistic, has pronounced Time and Space as illusions, declaring Real Being to transcend them both. The doctrine of causality is equally unacceptable as it assumes the identity of cause and effect and regards all change as unreal. Besides, Life is full of novelties, contingencies and unforeseeable creations, and has unquestionably built up a history of events in the past which have led to the living present, proving thereby its essential freedom and illimitable power to create, while the concept of a static Reality unable to reckon with these eloquent facts of experience is forced to regard all change of Form, all Action and Accident, as absolutely unreal.

While this is undoubtedly a natural reaction against the exclusively intellectualistic treatment of Life's problems, the position of Bergson is not free from objections. He identifies consciousness with movement. The wealth of biological illustrations with which he traces the growth of consciousness from its manifestation in the amœba to its glorious appearance in man is quite marvellous. On its way it passes from instinct, with its mechanical precision, to the intellect with its hesitating choice of means and liability to error, and lastly, to intuition which is Life itself—all along accompanied by movement. But the question is, can all this biological survey have been possible without pre-supposing consciousness, endowed with which this study of Nature on the part of Bergson was made possible? The evolution of the World till consciousness appeared is the imagination of the biologist, acting on laws perceived in a World manifested by consciousness. The illusion is primary. How can we know consciousness in itself except by feeling that we are conscious? When he is watching the growth of consciousness in the different orders of beings, he has already externalised it. He seeks for it outside, whereas he starts his enquiry with it in fullness. The nature of consciousness forbids its being looked upon as an external object, while movement can be both felt and observed as any other object. Hence, movement can only be taken as a *sign* of consciousness, while the latter though it may be ever manifesting itself in movement remains as the more radical fact of Reality.

Consciousness itself is, it is true, always changing. But what does that mean? Not certainly that the subject of thought, the witness of the external or internal changes, can ever change. For, in that case, the assertion would lack a basis. If my thoughts are changing every moment, yet a *consciousness* of the changes demands a changeless witness that observed them from moment to moment. Change as a concept or as an event must imply a changeless consciousness. Spiritual balance is restored only when this higher unity is recognised. Every element of the self can indeed be objectified. But the process cannot be carried on *ad infinitum.* An irreducible minimum of self must be left intact to testify to the changing process. Even supposing that the self is split into elements a & b, and that these alternately take the place of the subject when the other is driven out as the object, yet it implies a third element to report the succession of the two acts. It is thus obvious that the self or consciousness cannot be exhaustively divided up into parts that can be objectified. In all cases the

reporting element or the witness should be left intact as not amenable to the process. When we admit the changeableness of consciousness, we only mean that feelings, ideas, judgments, &c., change, while their simplest basis, the pure witness, ever remains constant. When a man says, "In my childhood I was fond of swimming", there is certainly a vast change between the ego as a child and the same as a man. Every part of his mind and body has undergone continuous alteration. But memory enables him, notwithstanding the diversity, to call up his boyish experience and unify the whole as belonging to him. This would be impossible and illusive had his witnessing consciousness been also subject to change.

Again states of consciousness in Waking may and do really change. But how can what testifies to the change, change? Besides, the witnessing principle, which is simple and indivisible and which cannot be objectified in any manner, cannot be conceived as liable to change. Anger might give place to good humour, hope to fear, hunger to satisfaction, error to right judgment, pain to pleasure, and pride to humility. But if the witnessing consciousness could change, what would it change to? Only to unconsciousness! And to make this assertion we have again to posit a witness, a witness of unconsciousness. This witnessing principle is the concrete of concretes, and lies so deep in our nature that its presence is uninterrupted, even when the mind is torn by violent feelings which seem to occupy the whole of our mind at the time. The witness is all the same there, though unnoticed, and when the storm has fairly blown over and the mental balance is restored, memory recalls all the past only on the authority of the witness whose declarations can never be challenged. When I say, "I was then mad with indignation", I give expression to the emotions that really mastered me in the past; and a memory pointing back to a real part of life would be a riddle, a hallucination, unless it were admitted to be the unlying voice of the internal witness. No change or movement could affect it as it would then lose its character as *witness*. With this exception life is ever accompanied by movement, and change rules both the internal and the external universe with irresistible power. Biology as an empirical science deals only with the manifestations of Life and their relations. It does not, like metaphysics, transcend the region of empirical consciousness. In the next place, experience, such as is available in the Waking state, is not the only expression of Reality (p. 27). The ancient as well as modern philosophers have been wrong in presuming that they could rise to Reality by an

exclusive study of empirical experience. Besides, movement like consciousness can no doubt be thought of as an object. But in both cases the subject continues to be consciousness, not movement. Even faintness is referrable to the manifestations of consciousness, and cannot affect it. The degrees of consciousness are due to the greater or less extent to which the conditions of manifestations, viz., the mind and the senses, function and not to any change in consciousness at all. When therefore we talk of faint or vivid consciousness we are only transferring the quality of the mind to the consciousness which is manifested through it. Further, granting a higher place in Reality to the percepts, we have still to dispose of concepts which cannot be brushed aside lightly as mere intellectual creation. Even as such they are real; they must be conceded a pragmatic significance involved in the scheme of life. If movement were all, and staticity a trick of the intellect, the latter, being a by-product of consciousness, must have derived its power to play the trick from a rooted tendency in consciousness itself. But staticity, being opposed to movement, could not have sprung from it, except through an agency which is different from both, which involves both and transcends both.

Bergson's theory of the origin of matter is by no means clear or convincing. His example of the steam-jet already presupposes a plurality which he starts to explain. The idea of mind and matter interpenetrating and implying each other is a subtle evasion of the point at issue. Perhaps no system starting from unity can rationally develop multiplicity. The place assigned by Bergson to Ethics, Æsthetics and Theology is equally obscure. His claim of freedom for movement or life lays down no principles of conduct. Æsthetic genius, the nature of Beauty, the value of Truth and Virtue, Faith in a God and in the Immortality of the Soul, these receive scant attention at the hands of one whose chief aim is to establish movement as Reality. Those that postulated a static Reality although it led to a "monistic superstition," served humanity in a far more profitable way than their modern critic, to whom Life, Consciousness, Time, Duration, Movement and Change are synonymous terms. Again, he says, knowledge is for action. And then what is action itself for? Not for Life, for knowledge implies Life. If these are intellectual difficulties with which Life has little to do, it is hard to understand the pains Bergson has taken to establish his theory on a rational basis. The fact is that Life has many aspects besides the physical. There are the moral, religious, philosophical, and æsthetic sides to it. A theory of evolution

that does not touch the latter cannot satisfy all the aspirations of the human soul. The materialistic view of evolution could not explain the genesis of life and gave place to the biological. The latter unable to account for consciousness made way for the psychological. But even this, failing to explain Sleep and Dream, must be superseded by the Vedantic, which is the most comprehensive view attainable by man. Reality must be immediate and eternal. Otherwise the views of past thinkers, being limited to one of the changing moments of experience, can never be valid for us, nor ours for future men, nor of any one for any other. All philosophy assumes an immutable principle of Reality. Our notion of the world is that it partakes of both change and persistence, including as it does the past and the future. Without such a conception, unity is impossible. A change from nature to nature would require a guiding principle without which progress and perfection would be illusory, and the hopes of humanism, as well as the ideals of pragmatism, unwarranted. The progress of an infinitely changing world void of aim or principle cannot interest present men who have no chance of participating in the privilege of an unborn race of supermen. Besides, Reality cannot change, nor Truth. Otherwise Plato, Kant and Hegel would have had different realities to deal with, and their success or failure to arrive at truth could have no value for us, nor be ever intelligible. Behind all evolution of nature and mind must lie Reality as the invariable background, and the ego must be directly connected with it so that communion between souls, separated by ages, with reference to the basic principle of life, might be profitable or possible. Time and change are limited to the surface flow of the universe. The deeps below are beyond their reach.

CHAPTER II: BASIC REALITY

ALTHOUGH the Waking state is the one in which alone reaction is possible and all our practical interests lie, Vedanta declares that Life to be truly understood demands a consideration of the other two states as well, which are as indispensable to Life as Waking. The biologist studies Life in its external aspect as presented during one state and cannot know it as it is in itself. Vedantic truth is not like speculative truth emanating from the subtle perception of a great intellect, which is often incommunicable and liable to be misinterpreted. It springs from our intimate experience of life verifiable at all times by introspection under the guidance of intuition. We, as living beings, can dive into its inmost depths and arrive at its core, not as aliens or outsiders, but as the very self of Life, as identical with it. We are Life itself, and the world before us is but a single manifestation of it. Hence Waking should not be permitted to domineer over the other states which are entirely independent of it. The idea, then, of the succession of the states is a purely Waking idea, and cannot logically be extended beyond Waking. When, for instance, I say, " After breakfast, I went to the station ", the continuity of the Waking consciousness warrants the sequence of the events, viz., my breakfast and going to the station. But when I say, " I went to bed at 10 O'clock and slept till morning ", I know that I was awake only till 10, and then my waking ceased. All the happenings of my waking mood are connected one with another as a series in a continuous flow of time, and my Waking consciousness accompanies them as an invariable condition. My subsequent memory of these happenings necessarily assumes the presence of my consciousness during the occurrence of the events. When I speak, on the contrary, of my sleeping subsequent to going to bed I must admit that my waking ceased before sleep began, and that my Waking consciousness was absent during all the time I slept. Besides, I express indeed my experience in terms of time and say that my Sleep succeeded my Waking, but this sequence is not like the sequence of events in the Waking state in which I am aware of the continuous flow of time throughout, which I feel in the form

of duration. My taking note of time or my feeling of time ceases with Waking, and I am not, and cannot be, conscious when waking ends or sleep begins, for sleep is just the condition in which intellection ceases. If so, to conceive Sleep and Waking as occurring one after another in the same time-series is wrong. How then am I able to talk of their sequence, that is the problem. The Waking consciousness can piece together only the occurrences of my Waking life on the basis of a time-series, and, as the understanding is bound by time, I am obliged to conceive a sequence between Waking and Sleeping. But this sequence of time would include my Sleep in my Waking experience, which is a contradiction in terms. Moreover, in my present mood of reflection I am awake and necessarily my intellect presents all memory of the past in the shape of happenings in the Waking time-series, though our experience tells us that there is a difference between my memory of Sleep and that of the events that preceded it. The latter are parts of my Waking experience and therefore legitimately assigned to the past, belonging, as they do, to the same time-series that continues till the present. But Sleep evidently cannot form part of Waking, and its memory is an anomaly.

In the case of Dream, the utter impossibility of referring its events to the same time-series as the Waking, becomes more apparent. While, according to the Waking standard of time ascertained after Waking, the period of a dream might be very short, say five minutes, during the dream itself one may have felt that one had passed as many days, though without realising the illusion at the time. And the rates at which time flows in dreams are infinitely varying, and may never agree with that of the Waking flux. The experiences of Dream and Waking are consequently incommensurable, proving thereby the arbitrary and independent nature of Dream-experience.

The results of our reflections so far may be summed up as follows: The Waking time-series ends with that state. Sleep cannot occupy any point or period of that series, as in that case, it would be converted into a Waking event which is preposterous. Neither can Dream events claim a place in the Waking time-series, as their duration may infinitely differ from that of the Waking, viz., as the rates of the time-flow in the two states are incommensurable and as they are simply stultified at the return of Waking. Hence the triad of the states cannot be regarded as successive in Time like any three events that follow one another in the same time-series. Yet

the states are real and distinct as testified by our intuition and experience. How is this enigma to be explained ?

CONSCIOUSNESS AND EXPERIENCE

The mono-basic view regards consciousness as the invariable subject of all perception, and when the latter ceases, a man is said to be unconscious. Much of the antagonism between Idealism and Realism would disappear with a right understanding of consciousness. The Idealist is not wrong when he declares that nothing can be imagined to exist without pre-supposing consciousness, and as the external world is known to us only as a percept, it cannot have any existence independent of consciousness. The Realist makes a distinction between Being and Knowing, and asserts that a real independent World may *exist*, unrelated to consciousness and since the outside world discloses an order and a power outside the range of our conception, it must be real though not as it appears to us. For a thing to exist it need not be related to consciousness. Here both the schools are using the term consciousness as if it meant the same thing. Vedanta reconciles both the views, however antithetical they seem to be. For, while, as the Realist contends, Knowing and Being are two different things in the empirical sphere, and the empirical world, though a necessary correlate of the empirical consciousness, is an independent entity, yet as P. C.*, Being and Knowing are *identical*. The World and our individual consciousness must be both referred to P.C., and not traced one to the other. The systems of Gentile, Bergson and Hegel are attempts to bridge the chasm between transcendental and empirical realities. They explain change and activity perceived in the world by positing them in the Higher Reality. Their Idealism involves a suppressed feeling of Realism, and goes half way to compromise with it. Its sphere of Absolute Monism makes their God and Religion self-discrepant, while their world is rendered perfectly rational and safe. On the other hand, the New Realists clip the wings of God, and prayer and worship become a half-conscious mockery. Immortality of the soul is unceremoniously shoved aside and evil is accepted as a stimulus for human effort. The whole is an endeavour to adapt spiritual belief to the ambitions of practical life. For to the modern thinker the pleasures of practical life are supreme. The evolution of the world is another incurable fad. But the belief in the world's past is made possible through memory of *our past* life. Hence the reality of the world is a notion derived not from the external world but from the intuition of the Reality of our own self-consciousness which is

* We use the abbreviation P. C. for Pure Consciousness.

simply transferred to the world, and conversely, this consciousness looks upon itself as transitory and fleeting in the midst of a real and permanent Universe.

The *impasse* in which we are landed in trying to explain the triad of the states must now be taken up for a fresh enquiry. I know that I passed through the three states. How is this made possible? My faculty of understanding stops at the boundaries of Waking and cannot transcend them. My memory of Sleep and Dream has been shown to be unlike that of my past experience in the Waking state. Still it is indisputable that the three states somehow wind themselves about me. Again even my sense of ego, my I-ness itself vanishes in Deep Sleep, and the ego in Dreams, although it is in subsequent Waking identified with the Waking ego, behaves so strangely and so helplessly in Dreams that the nature of the ego that acts in Waking seems entirely at variance with the same in Dreams. A hero that has figured in a hundred fights might in his Dream have knocked under to a virago. A philosopher might have babbled like a child. A logician might have fallen into a hundred fallacies and believed in the most grotesque and impossible occurrences. A criminal sentenced to be hanged might behold his own head severed from his body and wake up quivering. The *I* in the Dream and the *I* in the Waking and the disappearance of both the *I* and the *Non-I* in sound Sleep must all rest on a common basis which can be neither the self nor the non-self but the common ground on which both stand—a ground that transcends both. It is Life in the most comprehensive sense including all the states that it manifests. Yet we attribute the triad of the states to ourselves because we are Life. In this sense, Life is the wider consciousness with which Bergson starts and which is free from the trammels of the Waking intellect. We intuite this wider consciousness when we ascribe the three states to ourselves. It is the source of all things, the Reality underlying them. As experience can point to no other source, there is no unreality. The three states and the worlds manifested in two of them are that Life, Reality or the wider consciousness in which subject and object neutralise each other and are dissolved without a residuum. The assertion of Hegel that Self-consciousness transcends the self and the non-self and denies both by its transparent one-ness is a happy hit of genius which in the condition of Deep Sleep is verified daily by every being. According to Hegel, "The self exists as one self only as it opposes itself, as object, to itself, as subject, and immediately denies and transcends that opposition".

But can consciousness survive the disappearance of the two opposed elements of the same, *viz.*, the self and the non-self? What is consciousness when robbed of all its content? It is but unconsciousness, and sleep makes us unconscious of anything. What peculiar importance can be claimed for it? We shall be in a position to answer these questions when we shall have settled what precisely is meant by consciousness. When a man is engaged, he may be unconscious of the presence of a visitor. Here he was not wholly unconscious, but his attention was not directed to a particular fact. A sick man in delirium is unconscious because he cannot take notice of things about him, but surely his consciousness may revive. When a man is sleeping he is unconscious of all that takes place in the room, but he can be awakened and his consciousness returns with fresh vigour. In all these instances, we take consciousness as an attribute of the ego, as adjectival in its nature. It implies the activity of the senses and the intellect, and a man is said to be conscious when he can be aware of a physical or mental object. Thus the ego identifying itself with the intellect expresses its experiences in these ways, "I perceive," "I am happy," "There is a tree," etc. The activity of the subject is thus synchronous with the presence of an object, and the only proof of a man's consciousness is that he is aware of something, some object. This is the sense in which consciousness is understood by most men including philosophers.

EXAMINATION OF THE THREE STATES

But the question naturally arises, what is the nature of the ego itself which, associated with intellect, develops the capacity to notice things? Is it like any part of the objective world which can only be perceived and which can never perceive under any imaginable conditions? Vedanta's reply is that the ego is unlike the non-ego and is radically opposed to it in as much as the former is of the nature of *Chit* or substantival consciousness, the intellect and the senses being only the material instruments—*Jada Upadhi*—of its perception. If the ego were material in its nature, then under no conceivable conditions can consciousness originate. As Bergson says, the intellect is an organ with which the wider consciousness, the radix of life, provides itself, as a product of its evolution, for the purpose of action through perception. The ego is in itself the substantival consciousness associated with the senses and the intellect, and becomes a conscious agent when confronted with objects. This substantival consciousness is no intellectual abstraction but the Real of Reals. It is Life itself ever present in all the

three States whether with or without the association of the senses and the intellect. Our so-called memory of Sleep and Dream entirely depends upon it. But for this eternally witnessing principle, *Sakshi*, we could never refer to the state of sleep. For consciousness cannot conceive unconsciousness. When, therefore, we describe Sleep as an unconscious state, we can mean only that we had no intellect to cognise objects or that there were no objects to cognise, not certainly that we were reduced to the condition of a block of stone, for we are, after waking, aware of the period of sound sleep. How can we account for our description of sleep as sound, except on the ground of the presence in sleep of a sort of consciousness, though not of the intellectual sort? This is Pure Consciousness, consciousness above the plane of subject and object. It is the witnessing principle without which experience is not possible. It transcends the region of Time, Space and Causality and is called the Brahman or the Absolute. The great thinkers of the world have every one speculated about the Absolute because their instinct prompted them to believe in it. But as they sought for it in the world of the Waking state divorced from the other states, their conceptions did not go beyond pure abstractions, intellectual concepts, with nothing to warrant their reality in life.

No man can maintain that when he is in deep sleep, he is reduced to the condition of a mere stone. For, as soon as he wakes, intuition tells him that he had a refreshing sleep, and that he was unaware of the ongoings of the world, entirely absorbed in a not merely painless but positively blissful state of sleep. Now this feeling refers to a past experience in the language of the intellect, and the felicity unquestionably enjoyed was not derived from any objective element of life, since all objective existence was for the time being entirely annulled. The only inference possible is that the man returned in his sleep to his own nature and experienced its essential blissfulness, not as an ego, for the ego vanished then along with the non-ego, but as pure undifferentiated Absolute Consciousness. "The Srutis refer to sleep-experience as an illustration in life of the blessedness of release"—(Sankara). "In sleep there is neither ignorance nor desire nor action; and non-cognition is due to the absence of multiplicity and therefore of ignorance."—(*Brihad. Up.* IV. 3.21). Those that fear that with the loss of the sense of individuality the capacity for happiness would likewise disappear, must reflect on this part of experience which testifies to the realisation of indescribable bliss, independent of a subject-object representation of the

Waking or Dream-consciousness. The joys of the latter states are contingent upon innumerable factors that give rise to them. A man's mood, wealth, energy, age, temper as well as the physical environments, these determine them qualitatively and quantitatively. When the joys cease to be fresh, they fail to affect in the same manner as at the inception. Familiarity impairs them and cessation leads to pain, disappointment, vexation or mortification. Not so the bliss of Sleep. Its nature is uniform, it knows of no increase or decrease. Depending on nothing external, it is ever full, ever available and free from all changes or effects of time, space and circumstance. That it is a state of positive enjoyment is obvious from the care with which the bed-room is furnished with all the means of securing undisturbed sleep, and from the haggard and weary looks of one who has *mislaid* his sleep. If sleep were something negative one cannot suffer from its absence or be benefited by its presence. After the fatigues of the Waking activities, one seeks naturally and eagerly the re-invigorating influence of sleep. Exercise of power, pomp of royalty, contemplation of wealth, the blandishments of love, schemes of statesmanship, plans of a military campaign and even the labours of the literary brain are unceremoniously and gladly laid aside for a short repose on the lap of sleep.

> "Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
> The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
> Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
> Chief nourisher in life's feast".

It will not do to explain its unifying virtues by calling it a state of unconsciousness. For, as Byron's Lucifer says, conscious beings, such as we are, can never conceive unconsciousness.

A stone is unconscious in the sense that it can never be conscious, but we return from sleep with consciousness freshened and our mental faculties invigorated. Surely this would be inexplicable on the supposition that sleep had petrified us. Life persists in sleep and with it the empirical consciousness potentially. Yet withal we return to waking with some impression of the previous condition. Hence it must be concluded that Life with the empirical consciousness and the World in a latent condition is precisely what is experienced as Sleep. Such is our Waking view, and in any case it is impossible to regard Life in any of its manifestations as other than consciousness for two reasons. First, consciousness cannot conceive its own origination or cessation; secondly, Waking memory testifying to antecedent sleep is an undeniable fact and is incomprehensible unless on the supposition

of pre-existing consciousness. But it may be urged, if there is consciousness in sleep, why is one unconscious of himself or of external objects? The question presumes that consciousness can mean only that which is aware of an object. This is true only of the Waking state, but we cannot curtail its powers by requiring it to conform itself only to those of its features which we observe in one state. Even dream is a genuine instance of objectless consciousness for no one will contend that the objects of dream-consciousness are real. Our theory, to be correct, should base itself on the totality of experience and we should not twist or circumscribe the latter so as to suit our own pre-conceptions. If a man in Europe wears a hat we cannot say that in India there are no men because they wear no hats, the truth being that among men some wear hats and others do not. Human nature goes beyond hat-wearing. Similarly the consciousness which persists in sleep is not of the hat-wearing sort—the sort familiar to us in Waking, taking notice of objects. It is Pure Consciousness transcending the distinction of subject and object.

But can Pure Consciousness exist? Yes, it does in the shape of sleep, for, consider the nature of sleep. From the individual point of view or introspection, which alone is admissible in speaking of an immediate knowledge of sleep, the whole of the external world is absent and with it the ego, its correlate. How then can consciousness be aware of anything that does not exist or that is not presented to it for cognition? Nevertheless, its nature is not altered thereby, and as an unceasing witness just as it tells us of all past happenings in the Waking state, it holds before us the clear mirror of sleep, in which nothing was reflected as no second thing existed. The witness assumes the form of the ego when the non-ego has to be registered in memory; but when the latter is absent, as in sleep, the witness plays the role of a silent spectator and when waking returns puts on the robe of an ego in referring to it*. No *a priori* reasoning can avail to maintain the impossibility of P.C. For, if for mere argument's sake we grant its possibility, we are forced to admit that sleep exactly represents how it can be. Pure Consciousness demands the absence of subject and object at the same time and we have just such an experience in sleep. "In sleep, one gets lost in himself." S.B. III 2. 35. The ego and the non-ego alike disappear, leaving Pure Consciousness behind, which enables us in subsequent Waking to intuite sleep. The possibility or the impossibility of a fact does not depend on *a priori* reasoning but on experience which

* "There is no loss of vision to the seer then." *Brihad. Up.* IV. 3.23.

alone can determine it. Besides, when we are thinking of consciousness we make it the object, and consciousness is itself the subject. Thus in reflection on consciousness, consciousness alone is serving as both and all distinctions are transcended. Moreover, religious experience and Yogic trances undeniably testify to the experience of oneness which though restricted to particular individuals must surely be reckoned with by seekers after Truth, and which can only confirm the Vedantic interpretation of Sleep common to all living beings. This Pure Consciousness is substantival and becomes, as intellect, adjectival to the ego, when Pure Consciousness transforms itself into the ego and non-ego.

Again, consciousness must not be regarded as a power that can be in a latent condition. For it is the prius of power making the latter conceivable at all. Hence it cannot at one time be latent and at another active. In Sleep the intellect as well as the objects is absent and hence consciousness does not perceive, not because it cannot perceive, but because there is nothing to perceive. It is not the Waking state with which the Waking world is bound up.* If the earth should one day be swept away into far off space, the stars will continue to shine all the same, though we men may not be here to receive their light. It would be absurd to imagine that since there is no earth for the stars to illumine, they should of force lose their brightness or cease to exist. The adjectival consciousness is liable to change, may appear or disappear, may glow or glimmer, but the substantival or Pure Consciousness is changeless and eternal—being Life itself. Neither is the absence of the world due to the non-existence of means of perception such as the mind and the senses. In the first place, to Vedanta, the world is non-self and the mind and the senses are included in the non-self. In the next place, to suppose that sleep is a state in which the mind, etc., are inoperative is still to liken it to the Waking state, to treat it as Waking minus the mind. But it is a separate and a distinct state, for the mind and the world are inseparable from Waking, while Sleep excludes them. A thing not perceived might exist, provided it is perceptible, but not what can never be experienced, such as a world in Sleep. The idea of persistence depends on Time and no one would conceive the persistence of the world during sleep if one did not thereby include sleep in the Waking time-series. For the cause of the world must be sought in the Waking state alone as both the cause and the effect should belong to the same time-series. Hence a state gives rise to and includes its world while no world can give rise to or include a state.

* *Brihad Up.* IV. 3 : 21,22,23 and S.B.I. I : 5.

A word of explanation is necessary with reference to the expression 'latency' occurring on p. 43. The world conceived as latent in Pure Consciousness must not be likened to the future tree latent in the seed, for in every instance of organic development the substance in the form of the previous stage is entirely exhausted in the form into which it develops itself. Thus the cause is exhausted in its effects. Action exhausts itself in the reaction. Pure Consciousness, however, is not like the seed giving rise to the tree in the shape of the world, as in that case the original entity should be completely exhausted when it assumes the form of the world. Pure Consciousness, while it is the basis of the world-manifestation, *at the same time* remains whole and undivided throughout the states as the changeless Witness in us. Hence the world is not the creation, nor an organic development, but simply a manifestation, of Reality without affecting its integrity. For when Waking gives place to Sleep, Pure Consciousness remains unaffected, which would not be the case if it had undergone any modification in the interval. In the next place, the expression, changelessness, as applied to Pure Consciousness has a peculiar import. It does not indicate a static entity persisting in the midst of change which would involve it in the sphere of time. As change is impossible either, without presupposing time, Pure Consciousness transcending the region of time altogether cannot be rightly described as changing or changeless. But as even empirical consciousness which operates within the limits of time must be conceived as persisting unchanged in the midst of changes in the objective world, much more therefore should Pure Consciousness which is the eternal basis of all life be described as changeless, though strictly neither change nor changelessness can be predicated of it, as these ideas savour of time.

This Pure Consciousness is Absolute, for relations have a significance and are possible only in a dual sphere. Any attempt to connect the Absolute with its manifestation in the shape of the world must end in failure, for no relation can be imagined beyond the sphere of duality. But as a matter of fact we find, starting from the undifferentiated oneness of Pure Consciousness in Sleep, a world manifesting itself in Waking. As it can have no other substratum, we must admit that the Pure Consciousness itself somehow appears split up into subject and object, into the ego and the non-ego. From the Waking point of view P. C. has two aspects, the changing and the changeless. We may imagine it as an unlimited and illimitable ocean of Life, with surging waves of Waking and

Dreaming in endless succession, on which the ego discovers himself mounted by an inscrutable power indulging in Idealistic, Realistic or Sceptic speculations restricted by the special conditions, *viz.*, Time, Space and Causality—tossed on from wave to wave without rest, without cessation—while the ocean itself, the eternal basis, knows of neither change nor motion, neither increase nor diminution. The Pure Consciousness of Sleep is the waveless Ocean into which we merge, in which we are merged eternally, with which we are identical as Life in its widest sense. Being familiar only with that aspect of Life manifested in the movement of the wave, with our interests circumscribed by it and extending not beyond, we are apt to imagine that a particular manifestation is the entire Life and to look upon the basic ocean as non-existent, as pure negation. For that which manifests itself is the very condition of our knowledge of the manifestation and hence it escapes our notice. Now all the beauty, power and movement observed in the states can have but a single origin, *viz.*, P.C. which by contrast with Waking is commonly regarded as Sleep. But it must logically be invested with all the greatness inseparable from its being the source of this magnificent universe, that is to say with omnipotence and omniscience, with love and mercy, attributes which our limping intellect can associate only with a personality. The verse in *Mandukya* refers to P. C. in Sleep in these terms, "He is the Ruler of all. He is all-knowing. He is all-pervading. It is from Him that all things originate and it is in Him that they dissolve."—(Verse 5, Sec. 1.)

CHAPTER III: MODES OF PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

INTELLECT AND INTUITION

THAT the same thing cannot rationally be conceived as possessed of two contradictory natures, changing and changeless, is an insuperable objection raised by the intellect which cannot get over the idea of the conservation of energy or the law of contradiction. But Life makes it plain that in the case of P. C. we are dealing with a super-empirical entity which can retain its integrity, while at the same time it serves as the basis of manifestation.* The objection raised by the intellect is thus broken on the rock of fact vouched for by intuition. Besides, inconsistency presupposes relation, but the Timeless and Time-bound can have no relation. The Absolute, on the one hand, cannot admit of relations while the world, on the other, is built upon them, and this apparent contradiction is actually reconciled in Life. It is the persistence of P. C. throughout the states that makes a so-called memory of them in Waking possible. Being the eternal Witness its absence is inconceivable. The world, on the contrary, unfolds itself as the inseparable adjunct of Waking, and exhibits ceaseless change, novelty, contingency and creation and destruction of forms without end. When we dwell on the dynamic nature of Life we consider it only in one of its phases. Our view does not cover the entire ground of Life. Besides, the law of contradiction, which is the main prop of reason in ascertaining truth, can hold good only in the sphere of the intellect, in the sphere in which it functions despotically with its inevitable forms of Time and Space. The claims of the law must therefore be scrupulously respected in judgments concerning facts of Waking experience. But we have already seen that Dream-Consciousness can, according to its whim, transgress all the limits of intellectual decorum and connect things without the least regard for the laws of causality. Let no one say that it was all unreal and that the happenings in Dream cannot be put on a par with those in Waking. We may well question the wise critic: "But when did you discover the unreality of your dream? Not certainly while dreaming, for all your erudition and

* Gita IV. 6.

criteria of judgment including the law of contradiction deserted you then, and, with all your pretensions as the founder or the destroyer of thought-systems in the Waking state, Dream treats your understanding as a helpless slave and forces you to believe implicitly in all her arbitrary doings. After a dream you might wake screaming with terror and trembling, with no real cause for either.* Do not therefore speak of the laws of the intellect as inviolable. Life can force these laws to bend to her moods, and Waking and Dreaming are her undoubted moods. They both dissolve alike in Sleep. How can one be more real than the other? And what do we bring from sleep to distinguish the two? Besides, one who conceives, for mere argument's sake, the world to be his dream, immediately, by such a supposition, puts the opponent out of court; for by hypothesis all the contents of his dream, including the opponent, are only the creation of his own mind. At the same time a plurality of dreams or dreamers must also be dismissed as impossible and absurd. For a dreamer throws everything else into his dream. "My real world", says Bradley," is a construction from my felt self. It is an inconsistent construction and it also in the last resort depends on my present feeling. You may protest that its basis is really my normal waking Self, but in the end you have no way of distinguishing such a Self from the Self which is abnormal." (*Essays*, P. 46). This finds support in the following from Russel: "The analogy (on which we infer other people's minds from their bodies) in waking life is only to be preferred to that in dreams on the ground of its greater extent and consistency." (*External World*, Page 95).

There are thus two ways of understanding Life: one satisfying the time-bound intellect of the Waking state and the other transcending its limitations through the power of intuition. (P. 30). The former presents percepts and concepts and leaves us to decide as we like on the nature of Reality. Modern thinkers accordingly are divided in their views as to which of them represents the higher reality. One class believe that since even the perceptual flux, being reflected on, turns forthwith into a concept and since philosophy aims at the comprehension of life, concepts partake more of reality than percepts which, though immediately affecting us, cannot become objects of contemplation without being converted in the very act into concepts. If we had not been endowed with intellect—the factory of concepts—our knowledge of the world would not be that of rational beings, for the world

*O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space were it not that I have bad dreams.—Shakespeare.

would then present too confused a picture to render purposive action possible. The other class of thinkers naturally chafe at the superior place given to the intellect and claim higher regard for the perceptual flux as the more immediate reality with which we are confronted every moment in life. Bradley says, "In feeling we encounter Reality". The endeavour to torture Reality into shapes harmonising with a preconceived philosophic truth is most vigorously resisted. Why should Reality be static when Life exhibits uninterrupted change and transcends by its creative evolution every effort of the dumbfounded intellect to forestall the future in precise terms? So long as we confine ourselves to the Waking experience it is impossible to decide between two such views expounded and supported with equal fervour and ability on both sides. It is clear that we can only *speculate* on the nature of Reality; and with the advance of science in its various branches, our views must inevitably undergo modification, since with the illimitable progress of knowledge there can be no finality in human conceptions of truth.

Vedanta admits that, if our examination of life be restricted to the Waking consciousness, our knowledge can only be of the nature of a surmise or a conjecture at the best, and philosophic puzzles may exercise the energetic brain without any hope of solution. By the use of a more comprehensive method, however, Vedanta lifts us out of this morass*. To the Vedantic enquirer everything other than the Self can appear only as occurring to him as percepts or objects contingently, not excluding even the three States. Let us now advert to a problem which the triad of the states presented. We have found that as Sleep and Dream cannot be referred to the waking time-series, without their being so included in Waking, they have to be regarded as independent of Waking. But the difficulty that arises is, how can we conceive *three* states which do not co-exist in space or succeed in time? In the former case the space must be continuous, in the latter the series must be one and the same. Thus the conception of the triad would require the Waking and Dream worlds to be in juxta-position, which is impossible, or they must follow each other in the same time-series which would convert them into one state, either Waking or Dreaming. Besides, the very fact that we look upon the present as the Waking state implies that we have emerged from a previous state of Sleep. While thus unquestionably we

* This method of *Avasthas* is referred to in S. B. II. 1 : 6. As Sleep and Dream are mutually exclusive, the self, which passes through both the states, is unattached to either: and as in Deep Sleep the world is altogether left behind causing the self to assume the form of Pure Being, this self is Reality altogether free from the world.

pass through three states, we cannot conceive the trinity by means of our intellect, and our knowledge of life cannot be full without a comprehension of the triad. Vedanta says this trinity is one in fact. Waking cannot be separated from the Pure Consciousness commonly looked upon as Sleep, and neither Dream. All these are essentially one, ever one and identical. Sleep introduces us into a sphere in which individuality cannot exist. It is the basic Reality of Life common to all. Such terms as my sleep and your sleep are hence meaningless, being conceived on the false analogy of Waking and Dream in which individuality either real or fanciful is presumed. Dream and Waking represent the dynamic modes of Pure Consciousness, and what is regarded as Sleep is but Pure Consciousness free from the imposition of subject and object, pure and unalloyed. Hence Pure Consciousness ever accompanies and is the metaphysical substratum of Waking or Dream, with each of which it is identical in essence. It is the underlying Reality supporting both. The intellect, however, separates the states by its own inherent pluralising tendency, but, as we have seen, it practises a self-deception. When we speak of Waking or the world whose reality we discuss, we unconsciously separate it from Pure Consciousness, and hence the mistake at the very start. Like Dream, Waking is a state of the soul. It cannot, therefore, be proved by reference to the evidence of other men whom one sees in Waking. It rests on one's own feeling. But this as in Dream ought to be unreliable. There is one Reality. There is no unreality. In dealing with the world separated from Pure Consciousness we are dealing with a non-entity. Such a world does not exist, for it is unreal. Experience shows that Pure Consciousness ever attends every unfolding of a state, endowing it with reality lasting as long as the state lasts, and withdraws it into itself when the state changes. When the next state is called into being, while the *previous* state abides in memory the Present again under the auspices of Pure Consciousness receives the stamp of Reality. Thus, far from Pure Consciousness becoming reduced to non-entity in the absence of a world perceived, it is, on the contrary, the world that is reduced to a nullity when divorced from Pure Consciousness.

THE DYNAMIC MODE

It is clear that the triad of the states, or, more accurately speaking, the two states, Waking and Dream, being unconnected with each other by Time or Space, neither co-exist with, nor succeed, each other. Compare *Aitareya* I. 3: "The three States

are the dwelling places of the Self—all three are dreams", (of which the soul is the beholder and the witness). Sleep appears as a state of negation only by contrast with the rest which as of a dynamic nature interest the ego more by giving rise to perception and feeling, volition and action. In itself Sleep is not a state but Pure Consciousness or the essence of life, and cannot as such be absent in any of its modes. S. B. II. 3.18 : "In Sleep consciousness is pure." III. 2. 7 : "Particular cognitions cease in Sleep." "Where all is one how can one see another?"—*Brihad Up.* It accompanies Life as the basic principle and whenever the dynamic mode ends, we sink naturally into the arms of Sleep, into the depths of our own Being. In common language we are then said to be unconscious, though, for reasons already adduced, unconsciousness is impossible to Life. It is only the severance of the intellect from the ego which we take as a sign of unconsciousness, as in the case of trance. Each of these states represents the dynamic phase of Life and is the whole of Reality. The riddle of Life manifested in them finds its solution in the P.C. of Sleep. Thus, Life which is intuited in Sleep and of whose persistence we become aware in Waking in the shape of the memory of Sleep, is identical with Waking and Dream Life, and being beyond time, is indivisible in its nature. As a whole it ever remains and at the same time it also transforms itself into Waking or Dream-Life, like a stream whose surface freezes without affecting the current beneath. How it can retain its integrity while simultaneously it takes the form of the dynamic state, how it changes while remaining unchanged, is unrepresentable by our intellect, but is nevertheless an unquestionable fact of experience. Vedanta deals with experience and Life, and will not bear to be quizzed. To sum up: Life or Reality indivisible in itself manifests itself as a whole in each of the states—Waking, Dream and Sleep. It is recognised as P. C. in Sleep and as the ego and the non-ego in the rest, in which it also retains its invariable purity. Every integral part of Waking experience, the ego or the non-ego, every object perceived or conceived, small or great, subtle or gross, is P. C. in its entirety and is Reality itself, since unreality cannot exist. But, also no object, no world, no ego can exist apart from Pure Consciousness. The intellectual separation of the world from P. C. reduces the former to a mere nothing. Subject and object being correlates are equally real and are eternal concomitants. They are dissolved into undifferentiated unity in P. C., from which they originate, into which they are absorbed every day in Sleep.* Thus all is P. C., all is Reality.†

*Everyday the jivas go to Brahman in Sleep- S.B. I. 3 : 15.
†All this is Pure Consciousness S.B. III. 3: 17.

Are we then to look upon P. C. as static? No. All the error in European speculation is due to the idea that if the prime Reality is not dynamic it can only be static in its nature. But our conception of a static thing is that it persists unchanged in time, and the term static or dynamic is void of signification when it is applied to what transcends time. For, it is only within the limits of time that the terms can be legitimately employed. Further, P. C. cannot be conceived as an object, though in referring to it our understanding treats it as such. We feel it as our Self, but it is essentially beyond the ego and the non-ego, and is the substratum of both. It creates without forfeiting any part of its power or substance, and, while it is in itself the material of its own creation, it stands apart as the ever-present Witness of its own doings. Its power to create new forms is infinite.

It may be questioned, what is this P.C. after all? If it is conceived as pure being it is tantamount to making it non-being. What can be derived from it? True, as an abstraction, as a pure mental concept, pure being cannot be distinguished from non-being. But we have to deal with P.C. as a concrete fact of experience, as Life itself. Hence no speculative objections can stand against it. It is, for one thing, Reality, the basis of all Life and Movement. It is, for another, self-determined, free from the limitations of Time and Space. It has no attributes in that aspect of it in which it cannot become the object of the intellect, but when it manifests itself as the world it clothes itself with infinite attributes for our understanding. The greatest thinkers of Europe have instinctively assumed it. To Berkley it appeared as the Universal Mind, to Kant as the Thing-in-itself, to Spinoza as the Substance, to Fichte as the Universal Ego, to Bradley as the Absolute, to Hegel as the Self-determined Self-consciousness and to Bergson as the Wider Consciousness and Change. James who rejected with disdain the monistic superstition wanted a system which allowed a place for both concepts and percepts as realities. For, he argued, the perceptual flux bears a clearer impress of Reality on it than the dead concept. He is right in claiming superior consideration for the movement, change and novelty of concrete life over the concepts; for the former are the direct manifestations of Life, while the concepts are the manufacture of the intellect with which Life has provided itself as the organ merely of the understanding. Life supplies the gold, the material; and the concepts are the intellectual moulds in which it is cast, so as to assume the shape of the manifold percepts of the concrete world. But, even so, the dumb percepts cannot do without concepts which serve as the tongue of Reality. Realists and Dualists have alike

experienced the presence of a God and the reality of Life, but their theories have not attained a high speculative value for want of a single principle on which to explain the relation between them. The Upanishads alone, on the basis of entire Life, have built up a system that can satisfy all our spiritual aspirations, and the truths of Vedanta are final, since they rest on a universal intuition beyond the region of Time and Space. On this firm ground Idealism and Realism can both take their proud stand, and, after a long campaign of mutual warfare, shake hands with each other, in perfect amity and without the sting of discomfiture or humiliation.

CHAPTER IV: GOD AND REALITY

THE IDEA OF CREATION

A pure being like the P. C. is not non-being for the latter is no reality, while the former is intuited as secondless Reality of the nature of unqualified felicity. If Reality were not blessedness and if we were not that Reality, our continual quest after happiness would be enigmatic. The fact that we individually undertake to sit in judgment over all opinions proves also that we are of the nature of knowledge. Unlike beings determined by attributes, which limit their power and circumscribe their sphere of action in Time and Space, P. C. is free to manifest itself, and its power to do so is unbounded. Its nature as interpreted by the intellect must comprise two aspects, static and dynamic; while it is itself beyond the understanding, resisting all its attempts to know further. It bears both the aspects at the same time, and while remaining changeless, becomes the world—marked by unceasing change—and the ego that perceives it. In its dynamic aspect it falls within the range of the intellect and manifests qualities and movement. The dynamic Consciousness can be better realised as Divine Personality possessed of omnipotence and omniscience. Schopenhauer calls it the Unconscious Will. He manifests Himself as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world.* The physical and moral order observable in life is evidence of His continued activity. He is the power making for righteousness,† for all wrong doing proceeds from duality and is contrary to His nature as the only Reality. Every religion is pivoted on God and the religious sentiment deep-rooted in us points to His working in us as our real essence. Thus the rock-bed of religion, *viz.*, faith in a moral Governor of the Universe, is in the light of Vedanta no mere phantasy or hallucination, but is based on the most indisputable fact within the experience of the ignorant and the enlightened. Every virtue with which

* He is the Lord of all, He is the Ominiscient, He is the internal Ruler, He is the source of all, the origin and the dissolution of beings."—*Mandukya Up.* II. 6.

† "God is truth and righteousness"—*Taittiriya Up*: IV. 4.27.

faith adorns the Divine Being is but the prototype of those manifested in human beings, and to be real requires a real source. God is a Personal Being with wisdom, power, love and mercy in an infinite degree, as otherwise these qualities could not be found in the world which is His manifestation. This manifestation of Himself as the World does not, however, affect the integrity of His Divine Being. He becomes the World indeed, but at the same time stands apart from it as its Ruler.* This is a paradox. Yet those who remember the persistence of Pure Consciousness invariably through all our states will feel no difficulty in recognising the truth. "Man does not seek a God external to him like a despot who arbitrarily commands and benefits him: nor does he aspire to an immortality which would be insipid rest; but he seeks that God whom he has in himself and aspires to that activity which is life and death together." (Croce, *Practica* pp. 179 to 181). This sentiment finds support in Bradley "A God who can say to himself 'I' as against 'you' and 'me' is not in my judgment defensible as the last and complete truth for morality." "For the reality of God means his own actual presence within individual souls, and apart from this presence both he and they are no more than abstractions. Hence in genuine religion you have a pantheism which is not less true because it expresses itself by what in fact is an inconsistent polytheism. And you can break with it only by an individualism which reduces God to a finite person among others, a person whose influence remains utterly external. If, in short, for religion you need a personal God you must also accept a creed which is not consistent. And so far as you refuse, the price you pay is injury to religion."

God as the empirical One is often confused with God as the Transcendental. The former has attributes and allows of predication. The latter has none and neither form, change, quality nor act can be predicated of Him.† To say anything of Him He must be combined with Maya or the principle of contradiction, *i.e.*, we must admit that we cannot know how the Transcendental becomes the Empirical. But once this is admitted the rest of the path becomes easy. He at once becomes clothed with innumerable attributes. The Upanishads accordingly speak of the Param and the Aparam, the latter to explain empirical life, and the former to merge all else into the Reality. Besides, the Transcendental One can only be intuited while the empirical can be cognised by the mind. The latter is additive while the former is not. Strictly it is not even One, for number does not inhere in it.

* Brahman's rulership is in an empirical sense—S. B. III. 2.38.

† Brahman is both qualified and unqualified—S. B. III. 2.11.

What is Creation? It is making something new, which presupposes a principle that can freely act.* Hence it is Pure Consciousness, which is self-determined self-consciousness or the Unconscious Will that can alone create, not as an extraneous agent but in the sense of manifesting itself. For, in a pluralistic universe, that which is determined can act only under the conditions of its own determination and can produce but a new arrangement of things already given. A free principle, on the contrary, which is the only reality, creates by assuming new forms though retaining its own integrity. For the law of conservation of energy or the divisibility of matter cannot operate on what is free from the shackles of time and space. Organs fitted for particular functions, such as we meet with in Nature, prove the teleological adaptation she is capable of. Though we cannot know how Pure Consciousness or the Unconscious Will proceeds to act, since it is beyond the range of intellect, yet we shall not be wrong in assuming that the manifestation of the world is preceded by a metaphysical process beyond human imagination. This is no speculation. For in the first place, Pure Consciousness transforms itself into the Waking consciousness characterised by the law and order discovered by the empirical sciences. In the next place, the new forms so created dissolve back in Sleep without a residuum into Pure Consciousness which is thereby recognised as the substance underlying the protean changes of the universe. Yet the waking world by itself is continuous in a time-series as testified by our memory of the past, while Pure Consciousness in its other aspect ever remains unchanged. Creation is not a time-process but a free willing on the part of the time-transcending Reality.

The intellect, no doubt, seeks consistency. It is welcome to do so in its own sphere, *viz.*, the Waking consciousness. But facts of Life whose domain is more extensive than that of the intellect, must prevail; and, as we find in so-called Sleep and Religious consciousness a unity without change or movement, our fullest idea of Life must include both the aspects, changing and changeless. Inconsistency may be taken to imply impossibility, but a fact of Life supersedes the question of possibility or impossibility. Consistency is indeed the demand of the intellect, but it

* "As the spider lets forth and retracts, as plants shoot up from the earth, as the hairs grow out of existing man, in the same manner the universe before us springs from the Immutable"—*Mundaka*: *I*--*1.* '8

As the sparks proceed from fire so the pranas proceed from the self, from the pranas the Devas (Senses) and from these the worlds—S. B.I –1.11.

cannot establish a fact; and when a fact discloses inconsistency, we do not question the fact as such, but seek an explanation, while a theory is rejected when it is inconsistent and unsupported by experience. Bergson's view that Life is pure movement is unquestionable in one aspect, *viz.*, the active aspect of the Waking state. But at the same time Pure Consciousness reveals its own persistence throughout and a correct reading of Life should recognise both. These two phases of Life, although contradictory to human reason, must necessarily be acknowledged as undeniable facts of experience. Pure Consciousness may be imagined as the thread on which the three states are strung, or rather, the wide ocean of Reality on which the two shining islets of Waking and Dreaming are floating. From a deeper point of view again, this Pure Consciousness is the all-embracing Absolute in which those active states with their time, space and individual objects resolve into undistinguished unity.

But what is Reality? What is Life? and the World? Reality is that whose existence is undeniable, whose absence or non-existence cannot be conceived or otherwise experienced. In this sense P. C. of Sleep is Reality par excellence. The Waking or the adjectival consciousness (adjunct to the ego) is liable to be regarded as capable of cessation, and is certainly non-existent in Sleep and Dream. But Absolute consciousness is ever unceasing, and being identical with Life in the widest sense, can never be thought of as coming to an end. It overflows birth and death which are occurrences confined to the Waking state, and is beyond the power of time and fate. The world which is a Waking manifestation of Life, derives its reality from Life in its kinetic aspect with which it is inseparably associated and is the region of action and enjoyment within the limits of Waking (P. 48). Vedanta lays emphasis on its inherent inseparability from Waking life and stigmatises the concept of a world, intellectually sundered from it, as unreal, because such an abstraction does not exist. The world is not a creation of the mind, not a mere dead concept, but is Life itself apparently transmuted. Events and happenings are manifestations of P.C. as the unconscious will, and both Action and Knowledge are for a moral and metaphysical end. Bergson says, Knowledge is for action and action for life. But what is active life itself for? Not certainly for shortlived pleasures ending in old age and death. Vedanta answers, active life is for the individual man, the highest evolved in the series of living beings to attain salvation, to return to the source of all beings and be finally absorbed in His own nature, namely Pure Consciousness.

If Christ be a symbol of the principle of salvation, then He eternally abides like the Hindu conception of Vishnu, in all beings as Pure Consciousness, so that, human beings, endowed as they are with intuition and intellect, might by reflection realise their oneness with Him and obtain salvation. He is the real saviour ever ready to save. He is God Himself, ocean of love and bliss. The ego and the non-ego are independent entities, both equally real and equally springing from P.C.

DEGREES OF REALITY

It is one thing to say that P.C. is God Himself, but it is quite another thing to bring its divinity home to our imagination. The mind delights in images of power and beauty, and Life itself, to be made attractive, must be deeply dyed in the hues of the concrete world familiar to us. It is not enough to say that life is no non-being—unless we ourselves be such—and that P.C. is no abstraction but is immediately realised as our own self on which all standards of reality rest. The senses being the gateways of our knowledge of concrete life, what does not enter through them is liable to be discarded as dreamy and unreal. But this is an illusion. The senses are external organs and as such are rightly relied on to prove the reality of only objective things. The reality of our own self on the contrary is and can never be questioned. It is undeniable. While the reality of the non-self has to be established by inference, that of the self is immediately intuited and by its own nature can never become a subject of controversy. For the existence of the denier is the prius of the denial. Hence in speaking of the world, its reality turns upon its perceptibility and on its power to affect the senses which are the only sources of our knowledge of it. But we make a mistake in classing P. C. with things other than the self. It is the essence of the self and can only be intuited through its identity with the ego.* It transcends speech as it transcends both the ego and the non-ego. Both ego and non-ego bear unmistakable marks of their origination from P. C. in as much as the ego like P. C. cannot be pluralised † and the non-ego cannot be conceived to exist without being correlated to consciousness. P. C. is neither I nor you nor it but the indivisible reality of which I and you and the common percepts are each a full and entire manifestation. You are as real as I am or as any object such as a grain of sand. Yet

* Gita XIII. 3.

† Number cannot inhere in what cannot be included in a class. " A numerical collection implies community."—S. B. I. 2 -11.

P. C. is not divided thereby, for space and time, the necessary conditions of divisibility rule only the sphere of manifestation and cannot divide P. C., which is beyond them *. If therefore, we wish to realise its nature objectively, we have to study its manifestation—the world spread out before us—with which it is identical. Each of the states being independent of one another is an entire aspect or representation of Reality. They are not parts of one another; nor, being the totality of experience, can be parts of some other entity beyond experience. Thus if P. C. usually regarded as Sleep is, in truth, entire reality, then Waking life is but Pure Consciousness transformed into the eternal correlates ego and non-ego:—with this difference, that whereas the identity of the ego with P. C. is intuited, that of the non-ego has to be logically inferred. No alternative conception is possible.

P. C. conceived as an idea fades into an empty abstraction; as an external object, into a remote phantom. It is really neither. Language, it is true, permits of our referring to it only in the third person. But it is beyond speech and grammar.† It is a more intimate element of our life than our feeling of I-ness and can best be realised only through this feeling. The richness of its nature simply baffles imagination. It is God Himself, the Absolute Being, with whom the devotee becomes one, in whom he is dissolved in the rapturous trance of devotion. Every pious man whether Christian or non-Christian can testify to this experience. Religious *forms* do not matter.

We shall now summarise the results obtained so far. The ego is P.C. (by intuition). The non-ego is P.C. (because in sleep there is no reality other than P.C. and as Sleep and Waking are to be equated, the ego and the non-ego which are the mutually opposed elements of Waking experience must both be derived from the P.C. of Sleep). As P.C. is impartible, the subject as well as the object is wholly P.C. Hence when a man sleeps or falls into a trance, he only sinks into the depths of his own nature, *viz.*, P.C. which in its changeless aspect accompanies him through all states and which, as such is divested of all differentiation in time and space. Thus in waking we have P.C. as well as its manifestation, namely, the correlates ego and non-ego. Every individual has his or her sleep independently of other individuals, but realises his or her identity with P. C. only in Sleep in which all distinctions disappear. Perception and inference are the evidences of the reality of non-

* Gita XIII.—17.

† Reality cannot be defined in objective terms—S. B. I. 1.4.

self and are operative only in Waking. They are of no avail with reference to P. C. which can only be immediately intuited.

In the light of the above facts let us resume our discussion of the nature of Reality. By direct analysis and by indirect synthesis we arrive at P. C. the Reality. As the colours of objects presuppose sunlight, so the degrees of consciousness in beings viewed externally presuppose the consciousness of the observer. Our belief in the independence of their consciousness is due to the illogical transference of untransferable conditions and to the externalising of consciousness. The universalising tendency and power of the mind are possible only by the presence of P. C. in it, embracing the universe of subject and object. Hence partial truths and solipsism are unacceptable and likewise mentalism and materialism, which emphasise single sides of life. It may be urged that P. C. is a mere negation, but that is to describe it in terms of Waking. The last term of Waking life is death, beyond which there is no outlet. P. C. alone takes us beyond death. We have seen that P. C. as the undeniable fact of life is the only reality; and that the three states with the world manifested in two of them, are, being essentially P. C., real. This conclusion might satisfy every philosophic mind in quest of absolute truth, but the generality of men and women, over whom the intellect and the senses exercise a despotic sway, might feel naturally puzzled at this result. While life and experience alike point to the justness of the conclusion, "what", they might exclaim, "are we to make of the world before us and the happenings in them? Are they mere illusion? Where is room in this system for religion, duty, society, politics and science? Is all this to be dismissed as the phantom of a summer dream?" Vedanta replies, your difficulties arise from divorcing the manifestation from the reality underlying it. The world is not something separate from P. C. It is never found standing by itself, but is perceived in the kinetic aspect of Pure Consciousness. Hence to make the position of Vedanta clear, reality must be assumed to admit of three degrees. P.C. as the invariable accompaniment of Life is identical with it in its widest sense and is the highest reality. The world of the Waking state, equally undeniable, is no doubt a reality, but since its appearance is circumscribed by the Waking state from which it cannot be detached, it cannot claim the rank of P. C. or the highest reality. Balfour, discussing the reality of the world in his "*Theism and Thought*", observes:—"Through the progress of scientific knowledge appearance and reality are most widely sundered. The external world in its character recedes more and

more into the realms of the imperceptible and the unimaginable. We have no sense wherewith to apprehend it. The external objects as we perceive them are no more than a mirage of transitory effects having little resemblance to their more enduring causes. In the conduct of life we depend on them, we begin with them, we return to them. And yet all the time we know them to be false." Hence we accord to the world a reality of the second degree. For a similar reason, the illusions that arise within the Waking state, originating and ending in it, being also undeniable facts, though of a temporary duration, have still to be classed under reality, if only of the third degree. Thus, undeniability as our common criterion we have assigned a place for every phase of life. Unreality has been exorcised from Life altogether.

CHAPTER V: ETHICS OF VEDANTA

GOOD AND EVIL

LIFE in its active aspect is a compound of pleasures and pains, in some instances the one, in others the other preponderating. No man is a stranger to pain, physical or mental, and no joys are permanent. Some pleasures terminate in pain and some pain precedes pleasure. Disease, sorrow and death are the common lot of all. Man has ever been striving to rifle the secrets of life and attain to a view or a stage which should make him immune from evil and steep him in everlasting joys. The promises of religion, the consolation of philosophy are eagerly resorted to as balms to lacerated feelings. The sweets of power, the profits of wealth and the pride of learning are a poor comfort to the heart overwhelmed with disappointed love and domestic bereavements. Fame and honour cease to interest the afflicted soul. In these circumstances Vedanta has a peculiar pragmatic value. It teaches that life is only an arena of duty. One has to do the right and refrain from wrong at any cost without an eye to the result.* For joys and sorrows come and go, but they are restricted to the Waking life, the region of distinctions. Man as a reality transcending the sphere of happenings, is identical with the infinite in essence and is beyond the reach of evil. Everyday he finds himself resolved into Pure Consciousness in sleep and he becomes then one with God himself who never deserts him, because He is his inmost essence. Joy and sorrow, although they are real at the time of experience, are only the offspring of attachment to things which have a contingent relation to man, *viz.*, attachment to one's friends, relations, or one's own body. They are not permanently connected with him, for he experiences his separation from them everyday in Sleep and in this respect the joys and sorrows of Waking life are but similar to those of Dream-life. They are real as long as the state endures, and dissolve themselves without distinction in the bliss of Pure Consciousness experienced in Deep Sleep. Behind the mask, however fascinating or terrible, there is the World-Spirit, and to realise His presence in the external

* Gita II. 47.

and the internal phases of Life is the object of Vedanta. Empirical science can proceed with its instruments to discover and invent for the conveniences of man, but there will be a balance of evils old or new still left, which its limited view of life cannot enable it to vanquish. Vedanta ever at peace with Science befriends the human soul by lifting it above the region of strife and putting it in mind of its own immutable nature of bliss. Individuality is the fountain-head of ills.

THE MORAL LAW

The 'kinetic aspect of life which, however, cannot be divorced from the static must be interpreted as self-expression for the purpose of self-realisation. The nature of duty thus becomes clear. There is a power behind us, Life itself, impelling us to realise our own nature, as above all relationship with transitory appearances of the Waking life, and as identical with the universal Spirit—P. C. or Brahman—which ever underlies and accompanies them. Every living being, man among the rest, starts with self-love which is our deepest instinct. Psychologists may explain it away as implanted in us for self-protection. But why should the self be protected? Vedanta has a most profound explanation to give. We love our self for the self is most lovable. It is bliss itself. We love other things for its sake (*Brihad. Up*). Our ambition would include the rulership of the universe and when it is frustrated, life loses half its attraction for us. We strenuously work not only for means of sustenance but also for means of enjoyment, with uniform reference to the self. No child requires to be taught to love itself and self-love adheres to life till the last moment. Religion, Politics, Science and Philosophy are alike enlisted in the service of the self. The self rejects what does not satisfy it. Since this self-love is incurable and often makes one a very ghoul of selfishness, moralists rightly advise us to expand its sphere and—by learning to see that we cannot be truly happy ourselves unless we work at the same time for the good of our fellowmen—to cultivate the spirit of self-sacrifice and of universal benevolence. Vedanta goes to the root of the matter. You love your self for your self is the Infinite, and whenever you mistake your temporal ego for your real self, you are a traitor to your higher self, namely, God Himself, who ever watches your conduct and, with his moral law ever active, punishes you for the transgression. One might fancy, "Oh, this moral law is not very much in evidence. An honest man is often caught in a vortex of trouble, while a scoundrel escapes." Vedanta objects to this kind of

judgment upon the moral purpose of life. In its view a man's action has primarily a spiritual bearing. The scoundrel might thrive in a secular sense, but his success is a delusion—a penalty, for he has deviated from the path leading to self-realisation and a world of evil will again be imposed upon him after death to expiate the offence. The chain of future births and of consequent suffering is only lengthened thereby. And this repeated re-imposition of innumerable births will not cease till the erring soul is reclaimed to the path of virtue and is set down on the road to the right goal. Vice thus prolongs the course of the weary pilgrimage.

The following considerations will help to apprehend the rationality of the theory of Rebirth:—1. Our present life is evidently not an independent whole. It must have its complement in a past and its continuance in a future life. 2. No moment of experience, to have a meaning, can stand apart by itself. It must be connected with a past through memory and be extended into a future through expectation. On the same analogy, past and future births must be conceded as possible. The spirit of man is certainly divine enough to persist through any number of lives. 3. P.C. having incarnated once, as in the shape of the present ego, can indeed incarnate itself many times till it finally relapses into itself. Indviduality being individuality the same individual, after release, is never caught a second time in the wheel of births. God never deserts even the fiendish in spirit, but by His discipline, from which none can escape, He converts the worst sinner into a saint before taking him back into Himself. For, the soul of the sinner is as dear to God as that of the saint, and His grace like His discipline is impartial.

Thus the doctrine of Karma and of Rebirth are a necessary corollary of the Vedantic Truth. Life overflows births and deaths which are the means employed by it to perfect the individual soul. Every happening in life, every change is a move, direct or indirect, towards the goal of self-realisation. The world is perfecting itself, and history is the march of the cosmic spirit towards its self-realisation. It is the river-ocean of life flowing in upon itself till equilibrium is restored. All this is so from the kinetic aspect of life in which it seems to play with itself. Again, from the static aspect, there is no movement, no change, and P.C. remains eternally unperturbed in its own immutable and blissful nature. In reality the two aspects are purely mental. It must once for all be borne in mind that the pure science of Vedanta has absolutely nothing to do with Karma, Rebirth, etc. Theories, however, have been pro-

pounded to explain the spiritual fate of those in whom the higher knowledge has not arisen. These have only an empirical value and are pointedly practical in their scope. They relate to:—1. The changing and changeless aspects of Brahma. 2. The object and process of creation. 3. The perfection of soul through Karma, after-life experiences and rebirth. 4. Other worlds. 5. Other beings. 6. Religious practices, worships, meditation, ethics, etc. 7. Reason, intuition and spiritual experience. 8. Yoga. 9. Avidya or Maya.

DEVELOPMENT AND NECESSITY

Since we are the Infinite and since its manifestation in the shape of the world of egos and non-egos is for self-realisation, every action that deters the purpose of the divine will from being fulfilled will be vigorously opposed by nature. Hence the distinction between virtue and vice, between right and wrong and the supremacy of duty. While self-love as an instinct, based on the blissful nature of our metaphysical being, is working in all living beings, the love of our lower self which is necessary for self-preservation becomes reprehensible when it panders to the baser bodily and sensory appetites, as it then strengthens the tendency to embodiment. Free moral acts of self-denial loosen or curb that tendency and raise the soul to the higher spiritual plane. Virtue and vice alike take their stand on the basic instinct of self-love. Virtue consists in the preference we show to the lasting joys beyond the immediate and temporal, while vice proceeds from short-sighted motives confined to present enjoyment, regardless of the dire penalty to be paid in the future. What furthers us in our progress towards self-realisation is right and the reverse is wrong. Duty demands sacrifice of selfish interests, and forces us to work for higher ends. Religion is universal love, pulling down the walls that separate *your* interests from *mine*. It is the means of realising the omnipresence of God and the conquest of our lower self. Individual self-preservation becomes a primary duty as it renders it possible for us to realise our spiritual nature by unselfish action. Vedanta removes the primal ignorance which elevates the lower self to the level of the higher.

Facts of experience prove that P. C. is the whole of reality, and demand that the Waking state with its world of multiplicity should be equated with it in its kinetic aspect. On the basis of this truth, Vedanta has built up a theory of Evil which is confirmed by observation and experience. It conceives that the manifestation in the shape of the world has self-realisation for its

object. While individuation became necessary for the perception of the sublime cosmos, knowledge could be acquired only from motives of self-love. If there were no change or movement, there could be no life and no wish to know it. If it were all change, there would be no memory, no cognition of a basic principle possible. Hence life exhibits a combination of change and staticity, a world of movement identical in essence with P. C. which ever persists changeless. The senses, being outward in their tendency, have to be checked by the activity of the intellect, which reduces the perceptual flux to concepts and stores them within itself for purposes of action and reflection. But deeper—beyond the intellect and the senses—lie feeling and will which are at the root of action. Life consists in disciplining feeling and will in the light of the knowledge acquired through the intellect and the senses. The instinct of self-love starts the fundamental activity of self-preservation. At first, the unenlightened self identifies itself with the body and its organs and subsequently with the senses as these develop. In some people the range of the self is wholly circumscribed by them. With others it is identified with the home or the family, while culture widens its sphere still more, till it includes the community, the country, and, in exceptional cases, the whole human race. But in none of these instances is the self identified with P. C. and conceived to embrace all reality. Till, therefore, this result is achieved in every individual being, Life is working without rest or intermission to accomplish the object with which it objectified itself and became the world of perception. Wherever there is a display of selfishness the ever-vigilant Life represses the undesirable symptom by subjecting the individual to struggle and pain which are the elements of Evil in life. But it will become evident that this is not merely salutary but necessary for the highest purposes of Life, *viz.*, self-realisation.

Evil is the cause of suffering. The latter may rise in two ways, through injury to the ego or the non-ego, and the pain will be respectively mental or physical. When a man suffers from bodily ailments, nature intends it to lead him to detachment, for the individuation necessary for self-expression is at the same time a hindrance to self-realisation, and the sense of identity of the self with the bodily apparatus must be first overcome. The pain caused by sights of suffering in others, and the endeavour to remove it, enlarge the range of a man's interest, and he thereby realises that he as an individual, a conscious being, cannot bear to isolate himself from others, since the joy of a moral life is far more desirable than a

selfish one. A man may succeed in amassing wealth and acquiring power. He may utilise both for his own enjoyment to the exclusion of all thoughts of social well-being. But Nature, who lavishes her favours in these forms, punishes him in a hundred others till he feels the bitterness of life through disgust or satiation, and, if even the opportunities of a whole mortal life proved insufficient to *convert* his soul, Vedanta threatens him with a new birth in which his whole career will be marked with misery. Thus the law of Karma which follows necessarily from the eternality of life, provides a spiritual discipline to the individual soul loaded with the sins of the affirmation of will; and is unremitting in its application of the chastening rod till the soul after tasting of the bitter cup of affirmation, slowly through a number of births turns towards denial, obtains the saving knowledge and regains its identity with the world-spirit (P. 64). The perfection of physical laws guarantees the perfection of the moral and spiritual laws as well. Thus pain is intended in our best interests to separate the dross from the gold and to make us spiritually perfect in the knowledge of the oneness of all being. Evil evidently is a centripetal force drawing the soul back to God, when, otherwise, sensory pleasures would tend to seduce it from Him.* If, on the contrary, the world were free from evil it would be peopled with beings rioting in individual pleasures, abiding in their initial ignorance of their own spiritual nature. They would thereby forfeit for good the highest bliss which they can claim by their nature and would make no progress in their journey towards the ultimate goal. There would be no real movement and no real change, and everyone would turn into an ogre whose whole occupation would be selfish enjoyment. But God in His perfection would not rest till every individual is redeemed and reclaimed, and this divine purpose is unfailingly carried out by a spiritual scheme, by an ever-active process, which never halts, hesitates or deviates for a single moment. If man were not essentially identical with Pure Consciousness there might perhaps then be no justification for the existence of evil in the manifestation of life. We are truly aliens in this world of appearances and we feel the urge of an unseen power to hasten home. A child engaged in an exciting game might in its ignorance resent the parental discipline that requires the child to stop in the middle and return home. But the presence of the chastening power is gratefully remembered in after-years. If it were not for our individuation, the world

* God's plans like lillies pure and white unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold—M. L. R. Smith.

would look perfect in its beauty and sublimity. But also without individuation we could not be here to appreciate it. Individuation begets evil, and evil is the cure of individuation at the same time. The heavenly bodies with their eternal motion, the star-bespangled heaven, our own earth with its oceans and rivers, mountains and valleys, its forests and meadows and innumerable creatures going through their unnoticed careers—this would be a perfect picture of bliss made objective, but that our own individual lives are marked by suffering and by 'a thousand heart-aches that flesh is heir to.' Thus it is the individual view, the view restricted to the feelings of the ego, the lower self, that sees evil in life, which is there as a hard reminder of our divine nature, our oneness with the Infinite. In manifesting itself as the world the Infinite cannot have omitted to introduce in it the only means of our spiritual salvation, *viz.*, individual suffering.

The greatest mistake is to suppose death to be a punishment or even an evil to the soul; for as it is incidental to all living beings, to plants, animals and men, it levels down all distinctions of sense and worth, and must not be classed among good or evil things. The most powerful argument against capital punishment is that a crime committed in life must be expiated in life. Life is the sphere as well of suffering as of enjoyment. The most futile principle is to punish evil acts with death. Society might indeed be profited temporarily by the removal of a wicked man from its midst, but even this is doubtful. The individual is never benefitted morally or spiritually by his loss of life. Since the good of society is simply the collective good of the individuals, what affects the individuals must necessarily affect the society also, for the most effective punishment is life itself. Hence, Vedanta threatens evil conduct with a series of lives, not deaths. The most wicked man cannot feel death as a punishment. That cannot humiliate him which he suffers in common with the saint and the sinless. Our sense of moral retribution or of justice is not satisfied by this unmeaning and stupid end put to all action and feeling. The most enlightened principle of fight requires that the foe should not be killed when he is unconscious, asleep or insane. Repentance, affliction, conscious suffering, these are the instruments wielded by Nature to punish the guilty. She inflicts death when these are inefficacious, and she ought to know what she does to hold the scales of justice even, for her intent is to take him over to a new scene of life in which he can be made to repent and reform himself. With regard to a ruffian, a monster of vice, we believe that he must come to suffer. But if, after all, he only dies like any

man of virtue and goodness, how is our moral sense satisfied? Evil is punished in life and with life. Life can be rendered as horrible or as blissful as it need be. Capital punishment, killing in any form is the resort of fools and weaklings. Nature indeed kills, but she kills with a purpose, while man kills without. Hence in the case of a life of goodness, innocence and benevolence, cut short by untimely death, our faith in an overruling Providence receives a terrible shock. Death cannot be a punishment to virtue; to say so is simple mockery.

THE LAW OF KARMA

ONE might look upon the law of Karma as a primitive doctrine unworthy of being included in a system of positive science. But when we observe the defects and insufficiency of the grand speculative systems of Europe, arising from the non-recognition of the law and the consequent non-comprehensive views of life taken by them, we shall realise the value of the theory in explaining life as an entirety on an eternal principle working through all time for spiritual and moral ends. For Vedanta moral and spiritual interests are inter-twined. Vedanta does not confine itself to the consideration of human conduct and lot in a single life-time, but regards life as a process of development of the human spirit through successive birth suntil the goal is reached. Many an advanced religion would profit by a recognition of this doctrine. Otherwise, the goodness of God would become impeachable in the light of everyday incidents in life. An innocent baby dies. Another is born with physical defects. A Nero occupies the throne. Genius pines away in poverty and neglect. Vice is long-lived and virtue is buried in the prime of life. What but individual Karma can explain such tragedies and inequalities of common life? It is not valid criticism to say that in every generation life teems with misery and vice, and that, though we may admit the theory of Karma, it can only take us a step backward but cannot explain the original disparities. The critic forgets that Karma refers to individual experience and the principle acts as a means of individual discipline. That the seed gives rise to the tree cannot be gainsaid by the fact that the seed itself pre-supposes a tree that bore it. Thus our present life was shaped by the Karma of our past life and that again implies a previous one. Besides, the conception of a first life as of a first cause would take us beyond life and experience. Our physical body is the effect of Karma acting by instalments. It is thrown off when one instalment is worked out in our individual life. For the balance of Karma a new birth is assured and this goes

on till enlightenment is reached. Death, then, is but a passage from *life to life*, a divine dispensation.

But the strongest objection levelled against the doctrine is that it leads to fatalism. Vedanta emphatically repudiates the charge. Past Karma only determines the skeleton of the present life and as the latter also is a sphere of continuous action the clothing in of the skeleton very largely and even materially depends on present environments and opportunities, and on the way in which the individual utilises them. Hence while there is a certain delimitation of the sphere, there is ample scope for individual option of the free soul for activity within the limits. Freedom in a dual world can never be absolute. Karma, moreover, being action, a present action wisely directed might annul the effects of a previous one. Practical life is ever hemmed in by a hundred circumstances, but it is wrong to conclude that we are not free agents; for every endeavour of ours based on fresh motives belies it and proclaims the native freedom of the soul. Karma is thus coeval with Waking life and conterminous with it. Life cannot be conceived otherwise than as action. The theory of Karma and Rebirth has the following pragmatic values. 1. It serves as a spiritual discipline to man. 2. It explains inequalities. 3. It directs motivation to acts with reference to the building up of a future life. 4. It proves the perfectness of the moral law. 5. It helps to control the will and to aspire to knowledge. 6. It awakens sympathy for animals and even plants. 7. It is a preventive of crimes. 8. It forces the individual to shoulder responsibilities for his act and conduct. 9. It promotes mental detachment. 10. It implies the freedom of the will and God's goodness and justice. 11. It reconciles one to his lot. 12. It causes evil and suffering to be regarded as forms of expiation for transgressions of law. 13. It is the logic of perfected idealism. The soul creates its own worlds without dependence on a single birth. 14. It is a corollary to the doctrine of immortality. 15. It equalises all souls by reference to all births. 16. It establishes perfect democracy of spirit. 17. Christ's appearance on earth is an exemplification of the inexorable law of Karma. 18. It maintains the soul's individuality throughout the whole series of its peregrinations. 19. Neither philosophical speculation nor imperfect theism can provide the same comfort to the suffering soul as the law of Karma. 20. It shows the futility and the unsatisfactoriness of referring events to their immediate causes. 21. It must remain a necessary belief where scientific explanations are not available or adequate.

The joys and duties of life can bear a better comment in the light of Vedanta than otherwise. The joys of health and strength are natural because these lead to long life and multiplied possibilities of spiritual advancement. Social and intellectual joys break the fetters of selfishness. Religious joys arise from self-suppression. Power helps dispensation of justice and protection of innocence. Thus Nature encourages every feeling of pleasure arising from the perception of beauty, goodness and order in the outside world, as conducive to one's relisation of his higher nature, and acclaims every act of self-sacrifice and benevolence. These are the means by which her scheme of salvation—of self-realisation—can be carried out.

As to duties, a Vedantin, unless he is a hypocrite, can less afford to neglect them than any other. Now, what is duty? It is the penalty incurred by desire. Hence the discharge of duty squares up the account. Violation or neglect of duty must on the other hand proceed from egoistic motives which further bind us to the lower self, and Nature is ready with her well-meant though severe correction, whenever we are remiss. We owe duties to others as well as to ourselves.* We expect some good from our neighbour and we thereby bind ourselves to do something in return. Failure to do our part injures his interests and his resenting it leads to our suffering. On the other hand, we have to maintain our physical and mental well-being. A violation of these duties to the self brings about suffering equally. In the latter case society pities the delinquent, but in the former the omission or violation of duty is stigmatised by society and punished. Life demands that for self-realisation our own well-being must be secure, without at the same time infringing upon the rights of others, as that would encourage self-love of the wrong kind, *viz.*, self-seeking. Since sweet life is a boon granted to us to realise the greatness of the life-spirit and our oneness with it, our first duty is to realise our higher nature by selfless acts and reflection.† What is called Evil would thus appear to be a beneficent provision in nature against a back-sliding into the still and deadly waters of arrant selfishness, than which nothing is more abhorrent to Life; for it wofully narrows the bounds of our real being.

* Gita III. 23, 24 and 25.

† He who loves all beings is called a Brahmana—S. B. III. 4- 38.

CHAPTER VI: SCEPTICISM AND VEDANTA

THE SCEPTIC'S POSITION

AT our birth we are ushered into a world whose origin is unknown and with which we come into contact for the first time then. The world appears to us in our childhood as a strange place of novelties and somehow we bring with us a power to understand it. We slowly advance in our knowledge of the nature of our own body and of the world of which it is a part, in which it has to move and from which it draws its nutriment. As we grow older we experience pleasure and pain, discern right and wrong and recognise our place in society with the duties and responsibilities relating to it. We become familiar with life-occurrences and come to perceive that our physical body as it has growth must also decay and die. Love of life, being innate with us, forces us to enquire into the mystery of life and of the world that gave rise to it. For no one that has the power to reflect and can take a view of life as a whole, as it manifests itself, can possibly be indifferent to the final destiny of life, with which he is identical. The majority of men indeed spend no thought on the morrow, but this is due either to want of intellectual capacity and to disinclination, or to their present enjoyment of an abundance of the goods of life, of which they happen to possess more than their due share. Even among eminent thinkers the tendency has been to burke the question or abandon it in despair, as all human efforts in the past are believed to have ended in signal failure. Everyone would readily welcome the idea of immortality assured to the soul, if the doctrine could enable one to escape from death. But the famous founders of religions as well as of philosophical systems, who inculcated the doctrine with such cocksureness have all paid their debt to nature quite like their ungifted brethren.

"Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with dust."

They taught about our future life while they themselves were living, and could not, therefore, bear any personal testimony to the

truth of their assertions about man's destiny after death. It was probably more what they believed or wished than what they knew or could know with any scientific certainty or personal experience. Where are the great men from whose lips dropped manna of wisdom and virtue and who so forcibly enlarged on the soul immortal? Silence, the impenetrable silence of death, is the only answer. Life and death are opposed in nature. How can the one unravel the mystery of the other? The world is an eternal enigma, and our only connection with it is that we form part of it when we live. Just as it preceded us it will survive us for all time to come, as if our appearance and exit could not affect it more than a bubble the serene surface of the mighty ocean. What are an individual man and his life compared with the whole solar system or the galaxy of stars that people the infinite space and have been hanging there from all eternity? Bruno, quoted by Singer, says, " Man is a mere mite shivering on his fleck of mud as it rolls round its bubble of gas. A man is no more than an ant in the presence of the infinite. A star is no more than a man ". Man, petty creature, may measure the heavens, sound the ocean-depths, or calculate the movements of the most distant star. He is himself a phenomenon among the phenomena of the universe, and after his appointed span, must finally quit the scene of his erst-while triumphs and glory, alas, to reappear no more. As to the other worlds in which he hopes to enjoy ever-lasting life after first dying here, why, it is a contradiction in terms. Death annuls all the features of life, all its privileges of thought and movement; and a life, after death has supervened, is an exercise of pure imagination, possible only *in* life. Our short life and the world with its change and movement are alone the incontrovertible realities. Truth, God, Immortality are delightful concepts, it is true, but standing on no verifiable basis.

Such is the position of the Sceptic who reasoning from positive facts of experience unvarnished by faith, denounces all beliefs based on authority however sacred, or on speculations however subtle; and it must be admitted that his position seems altogether impregnable. But, on the other hand, how are we to explain the instincts planted so deeply in our nature which are as real as life and which will give us no rest till they are reckoned with. Somehow we feel that we are made of the stuff of immortality. The dumb world is as nothing before the articulations of the mind, and consciousness is more than all the stars and the Milky Way. The preference we show to righteousness over unscrupulous wickedness, our love of virtue though it may not meet with reward in this life, our undying faith in a Moral

Governor, our hope of spiritual salvation,—are these founded in delusion, mere comforting suggestions of fancy to make life with its tragedies supportable? No, there must be some real foundation upon which these rest and the problem is just to discover it.

It might be profitable to enquire how Vedanta would tackle the position of the Sceptic. Before examining his conclusion Vedanta would dispute the correctness of the premises. It would point out the initial error in assuming that Life is confined to its Waking aspect alone. The world perceived in our Waking cannot be logically sundered from that state; and apart from it, it is a mere abstraction. When the sceptic refers to a world of which man is only an infinitesimal part the sceptic is guilty of two fallacies. First, the conception of a world by itself existing independently of the mind that perceives. This does not accord with experience. Secondly, the world is assumed to have an existence independent of the Waking consciousness. Now, the world is a correlate not only of our consciousness but of our Waking state. Hence the world and our Waking consciousness are inseparable concomitants. This fact has to be borne in mind to understand the method of Vedanta. It may be asked, does not the world exist when we are sleeping? Why should we accept the inseparability of the world from Waking? This question is obviously the result of a confusion against which we have cautioned. Which is the world whose persistence we seek to establish even during our Sleep? Evidently, it is that which we perceived in Waking. Can we perceive it in any other state? If not, then we must own that the world and our Waking eternally come and go together. To talk of one of them, without implying its indissoluble connection with the other, is to be false to experience, for the world is only a determination of the Waking state. Now, we cannot get the world off from us. But we can change our state; and when from Waking we go to Sleep, our Waking has certainly ceased, and with it the presentation of the world, its invariable concomitant. Still, we cannot help believing that the Waking world did persist even during our Sleep. This is a habit of mind due to two circumstances. As soon as we wake, we see the same world or what we take to be the same and we cannot but think that what presents itself again and again in an identical form must be somehow existing in the intervals also, since no object, that was once entirely destroyed, can reappear intact in our subsequent experience. Besides, suppose we did not sleep at all but kept awake as long as possible, the world would then show no signs of reducing itself to nothing. How then can

the mere fact of my sleeping for a short time have interfered with the power of the world to exist by itself? Similar objections have been raised, but without success, against idealism. It has been urged, for instance, that although an object to be perceived must presuppose a perceiver, the world must have existed before any living being came into it, and therefore before there was any one to perceive it. Gentile has given the correct answer. In thinking of that original condition when there was no perceiver you have in your present thinking provided the perceiver in your own person. Vedanta's answer is identical. When you think of the persistence of the world during Sleep, you have provided the very condition of its possible appearance in the shape of your own present Waking. In the next place, although the sense of identity, with which we greet the Waking world, is enough to establish it, from the empirical standpoint which relates only to the purposive acts of life, yet this feeling of identity is due to memory whose dicta, sufficient as they may be for practical life, are yet unreliable as means of ascertaining the absolute truth. Memory, unlike perception, deals with past experience which can never again enter the realms of active life. In perception, there is immediacy of our knowledge of objects. We touch reality in the shape of the perceptual flux. But in present memory the objects or the happenings belong to the past and we have only dead static representations of them. It is hence impossible to determine whether these pictures of memory are exactly faithful to the original. When our recollection is not vivid, we appeal to others and get our notion corroborated. But here again we have to rely upon *their* memory. And what is this memory? It is a faculty that begins its function only subsequent to perception so that they seem to play into each other's hands. It is strange that when there is perception there should be no memory and when there is memory there should no longer be any perception. Nevertheless, our faith in the trustworthiness of our memory goes generally unchallenged. That is because there is a deeper principle in us in which both perception and memory are rooted and which is the source of their vital sap, *viz.*, P. C. It may be objected that, from the point of view of the present moment, all past and future are abolished as they are reducible to present memory and expectation. Hence only the present remains; but as this is slipping away from us, this view drives us only to scepticism. How can Vedanta whose arguments rest on Sleep and Dream support itself, since Sleep and Dream can only be of the past or future? This is not correct. Even when all certitude is

confined to the present moment, Dream and Sleep cannot be disposed of as they do not form part of the present time-series. Somehow they must be held to be present now, as testified by our irrepressible intuition, not of course as memory. And they must be reckoned with in any study of the present moment. The present experience must irreducibly involve the following elements: 1. The percept, 2. the perceiver, who carries with him a percept and a unity which cannot be sublated. Vedanta resolves the present into Pure Consciousness, since Sleep is nothing else, and since Waking and Dream which are incompatible with each other cannot co-exist and so destroy each other.

ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

1. It is Waking when contrasted with a precedent dream. 2. It is Dream by its perfect resemblance to the remembered dream in the following respects: (*a*) Sense of present reality. (*b*) Creation of a past and a future to harmonise with the present. 3. It is Pure Consciousness bereft of all distinctions, for, otherwise, one cannot realise one's sleep-condition now and immediately. While it is the Highest Reality it also abolishes all distinctions. Hence, there is but one reality presenting itself as three states for self-realisation. Dream is a comment on Waking and reduces it to nothing. X A (Waking)=X B (Dream)=X (P.C.) where if B=O, A also must be equated to zero.

Again, memory is neither necessary, nor competent to reproduce a statal experience, for in Sleep there is no intellect and yet we remember Pure Consciousness after waking. We do this by intuiting and by identifying the Sleep-experience with the present ego. Similarly, we intuit Dream as we are P.C. and identify it immediately with the present ego. Besides, it is ever the Witness which is intuited as the ego, though the ego that refers to Dream transcends Dream and Waking, and is neither of the egos with their respective minds. P.C. is the highest ego. We cannot intuit it as other than ego. The witnessing ego is higher than the temporary ego and appears invariably as present memory.

WAKING AND DREAM WORLDS

But reverting to the subject of the world claiming an independent existence on account of its self-identity from day to day and from moment and moment, we might observe that, in the first place, this idea of its identity can derive support from neither science nor philosophy. There is so much change going on all round affecting the smallest particle

of matter, or the tiniest organism, that the maintenance of a static identity on the part of the world is purest illusion. Our halting intellect can take in at a time but a small part of this universal change and hence this idea of the world's identity, so conducive to purposive action. In the next place, I wake, it is true, with a feeling that the world of today is the same as that in which I figured yesterday; but this sameness resting on memory, as it does, cannot warrant the inference that therefore the world must have existed—just as I now remember it—during my sleep, although I was not there to perceive it. And the more so because the changes in the world-condition, that I now notice, are just such as would have certainly occurred, if I had been awake all the time. In the face of this unceasing change strict identity cannot be maintained. This order in the world's processes is precisely the ground on which empirical sciences stand and must ever stand —and is the source of our confidence in the reality of empirical life. While Vedanta does not seek to deny the reality, necessary for practical life, it only endeavours to lift the seeker after the highest truth above the empirical plane, by tracing this sense of order to the innate tendency of memory, whose judgments are ever arbitrary and absolute. For, if the feeling of order were the unfailing test of the highest reality, we ought, furnished with it, to be able to notice the absence of order in the dream-world. In that case, we should be passive spectators in it convinced of its utterly illusive nature. We should be neither elated by joy nor depressed by sorrow, nor be moved in any sensible manner by the monkeyish pranks of dream-fancy. But what is our common experience? The wisest and the acutest thinker, the most renowned scientist, as much as the unlettered fool, parts with his judgment and his profound theories, when he is dreaming. Notwithstanding the test of *order* which ought to have enabled him to recognise the dream-nature of his experience he is actually pleased or pained by what he beholds then; and lo! he wakes to find that it was all a dream. This ought to make it plain that the sense of order, by which we set such store, ever accompanies us, in Dream as well as in Waking, and that the absence of order is not noticed so long as the same state continues, though on waking we find that the happenings in the dream were grotesquely incongruous. Again, memory in dreams proves arbitrary and unreliable. In meeting with an utter stranger we might feel that we had lived with him intimately for years. While wandering through a desert, a hundred recollections may be awakened in us of adventures of which we knew or know nothing in our waking condition. Hence it is impossible to resist

the conclusion that the sense of order with a coherent memory, engendering in us the belief in the identity of the world before us, although sufficient for empirical purposes, is still utterly insufficient to establish the existence of the world apart from the Waking state.

Just as in the case of one ego the world appears with Waking and vanishes in Sleep, so is it with the other egos. Experience can point to no exception to the rule that the world and the Waking state are absolutely inseparable. Similarly the otherness of the egos is a creation of Waking and is valid only for it, as the nature of the ego, as such, absolutely precludes plurality.* When Waking gives place to Sleep the ego or egos dissolve into Pure Consciousness in which individual distinctions are impossible. The cause of the world must be sought in the Waking state alone, for the cause and the effect must belong to the same time-series and waking-time cannot transcend Waking. *The states give rise to the worlds but no world can give rise to the states.* In other words, a state includes its world while the world cannot include the states.

It is noteworthy that whereas the ego goes alone by himself into a Dream he discovers himself in a world of other living beings and lifeless objects, and he behaves in it with the full belief that he is dealing with realities, though in truth he is the only real subject and the others are false. A Dream may thus be defined as a state in which a single real subject commences with a number of unreal subjects and objects, while, in contrast with it, Waking is a state in which a real ego meets with other real egos and non-egos. An unlooked-for difficulty now arises. If a single ego entering the Dream-world can find a number of unreal egos to meet him there, how can the same ego returning to waking be said to come across real egos in the latter state? The Dream-egos may of course be dismissed as mere phantoms deserving little consideration. What about the Waking egos? Where were they while the ego under discussion was sleeping, and how does it happen that all the egos wake up together? Where are we to locate the world which seems to be the common theatre of daily activity for all the Waking egos? These difficulties would be insuperable were the distinctions, *waking* and *dream*, absolute and not relative. *We always assume the present to be the waking state and by contrast with it the previous state, sublated by the present, to be dream.* It is impossible to distinguish them otherwise by any subtle definition. The

* There is no other Seer, no other Knower. S.B. I. 1. 5.

feeling *that we are now awake and move in a real world never deserts us even in a dream.* There is in both a sense of immediate perception and memory to guide it. Neither dream-memory nor dream-intellect discloses the unreal nature of the then experience. As in the Waking state so in Dream also memory refers back to past states represented as Waking and the illusion is complete while the Dream lasts. There is no suspicion aroused in us that we are befooled all the time. We have a body, the senses are active, objects appear, and the mind unquestioningly takes it all in real earnest, and the delusion lasts till Waking rubs out the whole picture as a mere sport of fancy. Now, although we might deny the presence of our real body and the activity of our senses in Dream, we have at least to assume the same mind, that, with such trustworthiness, guides our judgment in Waking, to have been present in Dream. Yet how differently it behaved then? Not all our notions of logical consistency, of coherence or, of the invariable laws of nature, availed to make us identify the state as Dream. We might now argue indeed with the utmost rigour and confidence that that was but a Dream. But this is to shut the stable after the horse is stolen. To add to our mortification this delusion is a daily occurrence? Nature hoodwinks the proudest and the cleverest intellect even after her tricks are known and repeated. The resemblance between the two states is so complete that we must confess they cannot be identified severally by distinct marks when each presents itself to our experience. We might go even so far as to think that the action of the dream-mind being so faint was quite different from the waking mind. But are the two Egos the same? The dream-ego is attached to the dream-body and is moved by dream-interests. In struggling with a dream-tiger, the dream-ego does his utmost to save his dream-life. The dream-money is put into the dream-box which is then securely locked up. When he wakes, behold! he finds himself transformed into the Waking ego with relations to another world now and with other interests. He recollects his dream and has a hearty laugh at its illusive shows. What then is the common element in both? Not the physical body, the senses, the mind, the objects or even the ego, for the behaviour of the mind and the senses was peculiar in each state and the body and the objects were certainly not identical. The only constant factor in both is Life or undifferentiated Consciousness.

We may here observe that memory appears to have the power of introducing a kaleidoscopic order into each state, creating, to sort with the present, a series of past Waking states

bearing the impress of reality. The variety and extent of its creative power would seem to be unlimited. It quells all suspicion and makes it impossible for us to know even the unreal presentations of Dream to be unreal till the state changes.

But what is the nature of Waking experience? We find that its elements are identical with those of Dream: memory, perception, the ego and the world. There is a sense of order, harmony and coherence, on which we base its reality. The present exhibits the result of our past acts and we engage in new acts whose results we can anticipate. In most instances we have a pre-vision of the exact happenings in the future and scientific knowledge systematises our activities. We thus come to place implicit confidence in our consciousness as the most trustworthy exponent of life's processes. Dream-experience is dismissed as illusive and we confidently obey the dictates of Waking consciousness as the reality. We must, however, take care not to become dupes again. Although the evidence of consciousness is the only basis available for correct judgments, we find that its statements are often inconsistent and even self-contradictory. In the first place the notion of ego admits of no plurality. When we say trees we mean tree+tree+tree, but when we say "we" we cannot mean I+I+I, but I+you+he, so that in the latter case the plurality does not represent the sum of individuals of the same sort. In fact, the peculiar nature of the notion conveyed by 'I' precludes a plural. We cannot torture consciousness into accepting a change in the notion. In Waking as well as in Dream, the "I" claims the same unqualified prerogative. Still in Waking, consciousness would induce us to forget her treacherous behaviour in Dream and to believe in her unimpeachable evidence as to the reality of the Waking world. In this she presents us other egos and non-egos, pronouncing them all to be real. Are we then to acknowledge without a demur her pretensions to be our safe guide? With an inexorable rigour she retains her despotic right to invest the notion of the 'I' with the same singular I-ness in both states. She seems to rule without the least concern for our understanding. "The 'I' cannot be pluralised, but all the same you must believe in in the plurality of real egos." Similarly with the notion of 'subject.' As the thinker or the perceiver, the subject automatically reduces everything else to the position of percepts. Yet, the Waking world manifests a plurality of subjects besides objects. Thus while the notion of 'I' or subject, is singular in the extreme, we find consciousness testifying in Waking experience to the plurality of both egos and non-egos, of both subjects and objects. No explanation can solve this contradiction.

Vedanta does recognise the distinction between Dream and Waking, but pronounces it to be relative, not absolute. For, with so much of their features identical, it is impossible to distinguish them by any special marks. Here similarity amounts to identity. We distinguish them only by immediate contrast when the change of state occurs. If there were no Sleep, there would be no Waking or Dream, and if dream-experience were all of a uniform kind, we could not say which was Dream and which Waking. We can fortify our position with regard to the Waking by referring to countless dreams, not one resembling another. We might say we feel that we have waked from a dream. But even these marks fail us. If in a Dream we were seriously discussing the matter with a friend, we might advance all these proofs to maintain that that was a Waking state, while the Dream-spirit might enjoy a quiet laugh at us all the while. Besides, the ineradicable idea that the present is a Waking state never quits us even in Dream and suggests a number of Dreams and Waking states relatively to it. As Bradley observes, "That dreams are irrational rests on the mere presumption that our waking world has a sole or superior reality. The true reality is not in any case a real world or worlds of mere fact and event. Our life has value only because and so far as it realises in fact that which transcends time and existence." In the next place, the feeling "I woke this morning from a dream", is not the monopoly of the Waking state, nor an incontestable evidence of it. Experience tells us that we may have a dream within a dream. In this case the enclosing dream is felt to be a waking. Finally, none of the marks of distinction supplied in heaps by our Waking consciousness possesses any real merit. For, when nature wraps us again in her impenetrable veil, we blunder again in the identical manner in which we did in the past. A new dream transports us in a moment beyond the seas, and all our logic-chopping intellect is left pitiably helpless in detecting the fraud. Nothing can exceed the irony of nature. For, our test is unavailable when we most need it.

The reality of Waking life although relative is perfectly valid for all practical purposes. Morality depends on the plurality of egos; science, on the reality of external nature; religion, on faith and worship, for our salvation. Still, metaphysical truth demands for its attainment the recognition of the Real of Reals in the form of the one Pure Consciousness manifesting itself as the Universe composed of the ego and the non-ego.

CHAPTER VII: APPEARANCE AND REALITY

WAKING, DREAM AND SLEEP

WE shall now be in a position to compare dream and waking, and detect and eliminate the common element in both. The ego-complex including the physical body, the mind and the senses, as well as the external world presented in the two experiences are peculiar to each and distinct. Yet we are able to intuit dream as an undoubted state of consciousness, giving rise to the memory 'I dreamt'. Both the states are referred to the waking ego analogously to the past waking states of the ego which are appropriated by the present ego. "When I was a boy, I was fond of swimming." In this act of memory I identify the ego of my boyhood with that of my later years, in spite of the fact that in many respects there is nothing common between the two conditions. The time, place, the states of mind and body and of external nature are entirely different. Yet, if the memory should fall back upon some principle which has persisted through all this change what could it be except the changeless consciousness that has adhered to the ego through all the transformations of its contents? Similarly, between dream and waking, although everything else might have changed, there must still persist unchanged a link of co-ordination. Can it be the ego? No, the waking-ego never dreamt and the dream-ego never woke; for, that would be a contradiction in terms. The common element between the egos each of which behaves in such quaint and queer ways can be only the consciousness, devoid of egoity and capable of assuming the forms of ego and non-ego, which are its two modes of manifestation. Thus the identification of the waking 'I' with the dream 'I' implied in the notion, "I dreamt" entails, as a logical necessity, the identification of the two egos with P. C. as well as that of the waking and the dream-worlds with the same, since the ego in each case is but the correlate of the non-ego so that they cannot be sundered. In this act of reflection we are not concerned with the reality or the unreality of the egos and non-egos of the two states, but we rise to an apprehension of the Higher Reality which is at the back of both and without which neither can appear or claim reality. This P. C. can be apprehended

only through intuition. It is not the waking or dream-consciousness which always desiderates an object. It is not the subject which craves an object. It is not the ego which needs a non-ego as its counterpart. It is the ego divested of its egoity, the subject without its subjectivity, the consciousness freed from the subject-object relation. We intuit it when we pass from waking to sleep. The process begins with the stopping of the functions of the senses and the mind, and then we gently drop into it—P. C.—which as our inmost essence is ready to receive us in its arms.

Sleep has thus two aspects. We commonly recognise only one of them, *viz.*, the becoming insensible to the ego-complex and to the non-ego, when the former ceases to function; but the other aspect of it, *viz.*, its identity with Pure Consciousness is dimly cognised in the feeling of felicity that we enjoyed during sleep. Vedanta alone lays bare its real character. The ego and the non-ego dissolve in it without a residuum, and from it they emerge again when presented to experience in dream and waking. It is the unfailing presence of Pure Consciousness in all the phases of life, in all the states, that enables us to apprehend the latter by means of memory or perception. For, as the states are fugitive, our knowledge of them as a series is due only to the persistence of a principle distinct from them. We recognise it instinctively as our self. For, when we go to sleep we feel we go into our self, and willingly drop into it unaccompanied by misgiving or fear, but with positive anticipations of pleasure. This would be unnatural if sleep translated us into the arms of an alien. In sleep we are resolved into our own real nature—the reality that in other states exhibits the irreconcilable antithesis of subject and object.

It may now become clear that the aim of Vedanta is not so much to establish the unreality of waking state as to point out the equality of the claims to reality on the part of both dream and waking. Reality is Pure Consciousness and is one. Unreality has no place. Waking and dream are real as manifestations of Pure Consciousness, without which they cannot form part of life or experience. The very idea of reality is an instinct with us. Being ourselves real, we cannot conceive unreality just as we cannot conceive unconsciousness or nothing, for these presuppose consciousness. Even the idealists, whatever their theories, cannot induce themselves to believe that the world actually staring them in the face is unreal, for their activities prove their faith in the perceptual flux. Their hopes and fears convict them of their inconsistency. But metaphysics, the science of the highest truth, is not afraid of peering beyond the common strife and

struggle and compels the recognition of a higher principle—the subtle and enduring principle of life, an ignorance of which makes life a standing riddle for all time. All that it maintains is that the reality of waking part of experience or of the dream-part is not the highest that can transcend all other. It cannot by itself furnish the key which shall resolve its own mystery. For, if it were otherwise, if waking supplied us with the knowledge of the highest reality, the problems of philosophy—Life as a whole, the nature of the soul, its immortality, the existence of God, the value of morality and the question of our salvation—would remain eternally insoluble as maintained by the Sceptic. The concept of an Absolute would remain an idle concept for ever, and religion for which men have lived and died would be the solace only of fools.

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

We might now take up the question whether there is a soul independent of the body, whether consciousness is not itself a property manifesting itself during the vital condition of it, whether the states Waking, Dream and Deep Sleep are possible without the body as the necessary basis, and how the soul or consciousness can claim immortality when the body which is the condition of its manifestation is itself liable to birth, growth, decay and death. We may be compared to the daffodils budding, blossoming, withering and dropping off. Their life though beautiful is but short and frail. Such a view of the Sceptic is the inevitable result of our looking at life from the outside, through the physical body which presents itself in our waking mood. The form of the problem makes it insoluble. The soul as a real entity distinct from the body has never been satisfactorily established. In Europe, the mind, the ego, the soul and consciousness are treated as identical. But a comparison of the waking and dream states enables us to surmount the difficulty. The physical body, whatever importance we may attach to it in this waking state, comes as a necessary concomitant of the ego, and since the dream-ego was invested with a different body while the dream lasted, we are forced to conclude that in spite of the fact that these two states of manifoldness exhibit invariably a body in each case, to which for the time being the ego is equally attached, neither the egos nor the bodies are the same, and there must be a constant element in both which gives rise to the waking memory by which the present ego appropriates the dream-experience to itself. We have already arrived at Pure Consciousness as just this element. But this P. C. is neither subject nor object. It is the substratum of both and is the Highest

Reality, namely, Life in its entirety. What we call the soul is the identical Pure Consciousness considered not as both the ego and the non-ego but as the ego alone. It is in this sense we speak of the plurality of the souls and of each soul as an individual. If the sum-total of things is a sum of representations in consciousness, how can plurality of existences be conceived as possible? The soul as an entity is obtained by a contraction of the sphere of P.C. caused by the individual view which the waking life of distinctions necessitates. Thus when the shell of individuality is broken, we discover the kernel inside, which we hitherto regarded as finite, to be the infinite in its essence, and indistinguishable from Pure Consciousness. It is in each state the vital principle accompanying life, and instead of the body conditioning life or consciousness, is itself, on the contrary, conditioned by the latter. The changes that the body undergoes are real for the waking self, but as its very appearance is due to the waking mood of the self, the latter, as the soul persisting unchanged through the states, does not depend upon the body which is but a manifestation contingent upon a particular mood of the soul. We perceive, it is true, that a man wakes and sleeps with a body as the prius, but this is due to our external view of him, through his body, made possible by ourselves remaining awake during the changes of his condition. The true insight into his nature as a soul can be obtained only by our retiring into our own self and intuiting the nature of sleep and waking by our own experience of them. If the soul in its individual disguise is thus the Infinite Reality, it is subject to the joys and sorrows of an egoistic life, only so long as it does not discover this its identity with the Infinite. The failure on its part, however, to know its own nature and its consequent liability to the sorrows of duality, cannot deprive it of its immortality or of its nature as consciousness. For, as the timeless Pure Consciousness it is the basis on which manifestations of a time-and-space-bound world with its egos and non-egos can appear or disappear. Also the soul as an ego may pass through childhood, adolescence and old age. It is subject to birth and death, but it is essentially free from all egoity, though, so long as it has a tendency to manifest itself, its power to embody itself and appear as an ego is ever assured.

When in contrast with the present moment of waking experience we think of the past, memory presents it as a series of beginningless waking and sleep states alternately, with a continuum in the shape of an external world. But here we should carefully separate waking and sleep. If we represent the past as an

endless line starting back from this present moment every point on this line can stand for only a moment of waking experience, and the world manifested in it. We thus get the idea of a continuous past. But our past states of sleep cannot be identified with any point on this line, for the obvious reason that the line represents only our waking. Sleep, however, as we have seen cannot be inserted in waking time and must be treated as a separate metaphysical manifestation of reality. Hence sleep like dream and waking, has no temporal relation to the other states. Each, therefore, must be regarded as a full representation of reality which is impartible.

We have observed that the waking state cannot be absolutely identified as such, but is determined only by the present feeling aided by the contrast with the previous dream which has been stultified. It may be urged, as Hume once did, that the distinction between the states is clear and defined since a dream is stultified by waking while the waking is never sublated. But the nature of our experience will not afford us this comfort. A dream is no doubt stultified in a subsequent state because the latter as the present state is always regarded as waking. If we dreamt that we woke from a dream then also the inner dream was stultified by the enveloping dream which was for the time being looked upon as real waking. As a waking state is by the aid of memory consorted with a series of previous waking states presented by it, it cannot stultify itself. In fact, no state stultifies itself, for to preserve its integrity it must be faithful to itself. It stultifies only what immediately preceded and is now discovered as a dream. Hence dream and waking appear to succeed each other each accompanied by a sense of realty. Also, *every present state appears as waking.* While all our behaviour in life plainly shows our belief that the present state is the real waking state and that it is not subject to stultification, it cannot, all the same, establish the correctness of our belief, for the simple reason that the identical belief was invariably present in our dream and there is no distinction possible between the two beliefs. One might say "Still we know that this is a real waking state and none can prove that we are wrong". The answer is, since a waking state has no characteristic features by which it can be incontrovertibly identified, our confidence in our notion is just similar to that of the man who woke from an inner dream into an enveloping dream. "This is waking, this is real, because I have waked from a dream and waking cannot be stultified", is precisely the feeling of both.

THE REAL AND THE UNREAL

It may now be interesting to enquire whether after all the states are real and if not how we can account for this element of unreality in life which is the only reality. Vedanta emphatically denies all unreality whatsoever. Dream and waking are equally real being integral parts of our experience. But to say that dream is unreal and that waking alone is real, assumes the possibility of distinguishing them by unfailing marks characteristic of each. Hence, in whatever sense we may call dream a reality, it can be in the same sense that we can call waking a reality also. The fact is, our sense of reality is itself grounded in our intuition of life as a reality and all our acts of judgment presuppose it. We seek for evidence to prove the reality of an object of perception or cognition, but can never doubt our own reality for the doubting itself demands a real entity the doubter as its inevitable basis. Even those that believe dream as contrasted with waking to be unreal, must admit that dream is truly a part of our experience as much as waking. Otherwise how can a man honestly say that he dreamt at all? His meaning obviously is that the world perceived in dream was unreal but that that he perceived a world then and that he then believed it to be real is all quite true. In other words he had *really* experienced an illusion. But even then we have to account for the sense of reality that would not abandon us even during an illusion. Vedanta says, you cannot think of anything as unreal, because you are real. Bosanquet observes that "Gentile rejects the vulgar notion that when we awake we grasp at material sense to restore us to a certainty of our own reality. The truth is the reverse. We are not making external nature the touchstone of reality. The touchstone is in ourselves. You cannot, therefore, conceive or experience unreality. The real is what is eternally present and your experiences must eternally appear real."

When P.C. assumes the form of empirical consciousness on the one hand and of the objective world on the other it imposes on both the marks of their unmistakable substratum or base, *viz.*, itself. Empirical consciousness cognises its object as real and the object on its part appears as real. For, reality is immanent in both and is indivisibly one. Even the antithetical nature of subject and object cannot create a division in P.C., which as timeless transcends both yet underlies both.* Empirical consciousness would seem to function under a law which makes it instinctively apprehend every cognition as real, as if it said, "I see a chair, I am real, the chair is real and my seeing is real". This is its uniform

* "And in the highest sense super-imposition is unreal."—S. B. Introduction.

manner in correct cognitions as well as in illusions. "I see a snake. It is real", it says at one moment. "No, no, I made a mistake. It is not a snake. It is only a rope. The rope is real," it says as soon as the illusion is detected. "I see a river, it is real", it says in a dream. "No, no, it was only a dream-river, I am in my bed-room. This is real," it says on my awaking. Hence, although the empirical consciousness is our only means of perception, we have to note this peculiar nature of its testimony to the reality of our experience. On the one hand it stamps as real whatever it cognises for the moment, but not without reserving to itself the right of condemning its own judgment, when, at the next moment, it feels the need to change. It then persuades us to accept its present pronouncement in supersession of its last. That is to say, it ever acts on the principle, "What I now say is true, what I now see is real." This must be so as no experience that is actually present can be conceived to be unreal. For every experience is experience of life, of reality, and the eternal presence of Reality compels every cognition to appear with the stamp of reality on it. Similarly, on the objective side, the chair before me is a present experience and we cannot believe what we perceive to be unreal. To our nature as Reality the conception of unreality is impossible.

But a distinction has to be made in the judgments of the empirical consciousness. While every fact of experience must, willy-nilly, be accepted as real, its reality as an appearance has to be confined to the state in which alone we apprehend or can apprehend it. For instance, dream-experience is real as long as the dream lasts. The snake is real till it is discovered to be only a rope. And these judgments are liable to be contradicted when the state is stultified or the conditions of perception change. It thus remains as an indisputable conclusion that our waking experience alone can be taken as beyond stultification and is the highest reality of active life. But philosophy which soars beyond the flights of the empirical consciousness will not be contented with this result. Its aim is to discover the Real of Reals and to detect the constant element in all the three states of which waking is but one. This it identifies as P. C. which is at the base of, though passing beyond, all change and changelessness, which are restricted to the region of time. The wonder is not that philosophy pronounces a real world to be unreal, but that an empirical consciousness is unable to recognise even an unreal experience to be unreal at the moment of actual experience, as in the instances of a dream-tiger or a rope-snake. The element of unreality according to

Vedanta is not in life but in our interpretation of it. It is true that empirical life does not present a single instance of true destruction, *viz.*, of Being changed into absolute Non-Being. Hence the idea of Reality suddenly manifesting itself as the world without any preliminary process might be felt somewhat difficult to conceive. For, as Being is never seen to change into Nothing, so a previous Nothing cannot be conceived to blossom into Something. This objection is answered by reference to the Dream and Sleep parts of our experience. The world unfolding itself in a moment's dream is quite different from and unrelated to the numerous worlds disclosing themselves in other dreams. None of them can claim real existence and when they disappear they do so leaving not a trace behind. In other words, their destruction is absolute and their manifestation causeless.

P. C., THE REALITY

Pluralism cannot live in the rarefied air of Vedanta. The world, which we perceive and believe to be rational or intelligible, as well as the ego of which it is the object, must both be referred to the same source, *viz.*, P. C. For if the world were an independent entity it is impossible to speculate how it could be reduced to the terms of an alien entity, *viz.*, Consciousness. Even the idea of its otherness demands the aid of Consciousness to generate it, and really presupposes it. But P. C. is not one nor many, for both these are temporal concepts. We can describe it only as neither, for so we intuit it. Number cannot enter into the nature of what cannot be objectified.

When we say that the higher reality is P. C. we mean that there can be no second thing in juxtaposition with it or that can be admitted to the same rank of reality. Empirical experience differs in this respect. It exhibits a plurality of egos and non-egos, all equally real, all that can be juxtaposed and all related to one another. In the light of the Real of Reals, this plurality can be allowed only in a diluted sense of reality of a lower degree, and is absolutely denied in the higher, where P. C. reigns supreme. The pronouncement of Vedanta that all plurality is illusive must be taken strictly in this transcendental sense. Yet, illusion does not mean the same thing as hallucination, which many suppose Vedanta to declare the world to be. No, the world is not a mere phantasy, it is not a summer-dream, it is but the disguise worn by Reality to the time-bound intellect. Piercing through its external form you arrive at the highest reality. It may be compared to a dream, but it is not a meaningless and baseless

shadow. The Real of Reals is its eternal background. To serve the purposes of practical life, the intellect assumes its (the world's) absolute reality, against which Vedanta declares that it is a mere nothing beside Pure Consciousness. It may not be out of place to refer here to certain fundamental contradictions that arise from the nature of the constitution of the human intellect—contradictions pervading all human thought and life, but, none the less, contradictions. 1. Multiplicity of souls, although a soul as a subject cannot be pluralised. 2. Externality of the world, although this externality is within consciousness. 3. Life conceived as extending beyond the present life, which is responsible for the idea of Life and Time at all. 4. A spiritual world cast by imagination in the mould of the present physical one. 5. Self viewed through time and space and pluralised. 6. A world perceptible, fancied to exist beyond the percept as its substrate. 7. Waking state extended before and behind, through memory and expectation.

We might now enquire into the origin of our notion of reality. The conviction of our own reality is based on intuition. If the whole world dispute it that conviction will not be affected in the least. But when the reality of anything other than our self has to be determined we insist on unimpeachable evidence. This paramount position that we assign to our self is due to four facts. 1. We cannot deny our own existence. 2. We cannot conceive our own non-existence. 3. We experience continuity without a break of our life through the three states. 4. Discontinuity is inconceivable. Hence we feel our own reality instinctively.* As to the world let us examine the facts 1. We cannot, it is true deny its existence during our waking state, but it is not perceived in our sleep though we assume its persistence throughout. This position involves a fallacy already indicated. 2. Again we connot indeed conceive its absence from our waking life, but we do experience its utter negation in sleep and dream. 3. As to the persistence of the world through sleep and dream, we have no personal experience but infer it from its reappearance at the next waking. A word or two on the value of this inference may not be amiss. When a man travels by train from, say, A to D through the intermediate stations B and C, he passes the latter at definite intervals of time and distance, and though he may not perceive the stations B and C when he is at A, he may reasonably believe that B and C have not been spirited away simply because he does not happen to be seeing them. For, he can repeat his trial by

* The self does not depend upon external evidence—S. B. II. 3. 7.

travelling back and satisfying himself about the reality of the definite positions of B and C. In this experience these stations are permanently connected by time and space. With reference to the world, however, we have no such experience. When we wake we cognise it and can do so at every waking. But sleep and waking do not like B and C stand on a common ground of time and space, are not successive points on the same line of time or co-existent in the same continuity of space. As we have already seen, these states are independent of or isolated from each other. Hence our inference that the world persists during sleep is fallacious, though all our waking activities proceed undisturbed by the fallacy. These activities depend upon memory and present perception, and so long as the latter are harmonious, we do not trouble about the validity or the reverse of the presumption with which we start in waking. But Vedanta which goes behind the waking state points out the flaw in the reasoning, as its aim is to discover the reality to which both sleep and waking are to be traced.

PRIMEVAL IGNORANCE AND MISTAKEN TRANSFERENCE

Although Life is a sublime manifestation of the One Reality, and is full of Beauty and Bliss, yet we start with mistaken notions and the fundamental error is to conceive plurality and distinctions as real, independently of the basic Reality. We oppose self and non-self to each other, and, to increase the confusion, we transpose the characteristics of each to the other side.* Thus we regard the subject as one among the objects, and as a contingent occurrence in an eternal objective world, and conversely, that the world is real and permanent while the subject as an individual is a negligible element in it, appearing and disappearing in time. The soul which is experienced, realised as an immutable subject, is clothed with all the attributes of the objective body and is believed to grow, decay and die with it. On the contrary, the truth is that the idea of Reality as that which never ceases to exist is primarily derived from our own intuition of the nature of the soul as persisting uninterrupted through the three states. This idea is illogically transferred to the external world, which, though offering itself for our perception only in waking, is presumed to continue to exist in the interval also, to satisfy our notion of reality which is that of unceasing existence. But it is in our own case alone that this unceasing existence is realised, while in the case of the world it is only a concession for our practical convenience. Thus the notion that the world is real in the same sense in which we are,

* All human procedure presupposes mutual superimposition or *adhyasa*. —S. B. Introduction.

cannot gain equal support from reason. In the one case we have immediate experience, in the other we rely on inference which draws its vital sap from the testimony of others and from memory. It is, however, forgotten that the 'others' also are included in the world whose nature we are now examining, and memory is a present offshoot of waking consciousness. Deprived of these frail props, the notion of the continued existence of the objective world of the waking state, continued even during our other states, collapses. Yet, commonly we speak of the world as a more permanently real entity than our own self, which we take to be a shortlived and contemptible atom. The ideas of life and reality proceed from us; still we look upon the world as the source of both. Sleep and dream become comparatively unmeaning, and the external world, the great fact. Thus our states of Waking, Sleep and Dream are somehow flung into the world-heap, though we cannot explain them; and we forget that it is the world that has to go into our waking with which it is bound up, and that sleep and that dream are extra experiences of life lying altogether outside the external world. This is what Vedanta describes as the mistaken transference of the characteristics of the subject to the object, and *vice versa.* Experience and Life are perfectly innocent. There is Reality and there are its manifestations. It is we that are responsible for the error and the error must be obvious to all, though all the same we cling to it in our life and conduct. It consists in treating the manifestations as entitled to be accepted as real, independent of their transcendental basis. Now, we may account for this universal belief riddled with contradictions, by a theory of Primeval Ignorance or Maya, and the theory may or may not be acceptable. But the error is a fact out of which no intellectual subtlety can enable us to wriggle, and Vedanta alone cures this radical tendency to err.

It is thus evident that the instinct of reality with which we enter the waking world is originally derived from our immediate intuition of our self as life and as unbroken consciousness, and we subsequently transfer the notion to the external world. The latter is dumb in regard to the questions we may put to it, and, being periodical, so to say, in its appearance, cannot succeed in proving its own unbroken continuity of existence.* We generously invest it with the reality which is truly our own privilege; but reflection with its decisive voice declares that the

* That this world is after all but a show,—a phenomenon or appearance, no real thing. All deep souls see into that,—the Hindu mythologist, the German philosopher,--the Shakepeare, the earnest thinker, wherever he may be; "We are such stuff as dreams are made of".—Carlyle

two cases are not on all fours with each other and must be discriminated. Perhaps even this predilection on our part may be explained by remembering the common source of the ego and the non-ego, and their original kinship in P. C.

CHAPTER VIII: KNOWLEDGE AND RELEASE

SLEEP

THE region of P. C. is that of bliss, beauty and immortality. Our feeble senses and finite mind cannot bear the blaze of its splendour. So, when we enter its realm our senses are bound up and our proud intellect is blind-folded as we gently come under the dazzling effulgence of the sleep-welkin to receive the life-giving caresses of Mother Nature. We return to waking with the imprint of her fond kisses still warm on our cheek; and, like the garrison waking after the plundering foes have left the castle, our senses and the intellect slowly recover their activity, conscious of no loss, but dimly impressed with the joy, now past, and are soon allured by the subdued tints of everyday-life. Waking presents but a faint epitome of the riches of Heaven whose splendour would daze our mortal faculties. It is only the gifted that boldly enter Heaven's precincts and come back after a dumb enjoyment of its bliss. These are men going into religious or yogic trances, and whatever their creed or caste, their testimony to its ineffable beauty and joy is uniform. The time-bound mind or the senses dealing with the perceptual flux are inadequate to comprehend the nature of P. C., which is a negation of all marks or attributes whereby we identify an empirical object. It is indescribable in the language of the intellect, and can only be intuited. For, in P. C., God holds us in close embrace, as it were, in which duality melts away and distinctions vanish. It is neither *static* nor *dynamic*, neither substance, nor act. These are but time-tainted notions, while P. C. is beyond time, space or causation. It is the Reality that presents itself under the mask of the ego and the non-ego in our waking experience, and we most truly carry with us this beatitude, unaware of its presence or worth. The kingdom of God is in us, but alas, when we enter it, as we daily do in sleep, our faculties become spellbound, and we return from the ecstasy of a close communion in utter ignorance of its nature, and from freedom to fetters. For, the intellect, which is our organ of cognition, functions under limitations which disqualify it by itself, for a comprehension of the higher Reality.

Thus Vedanta by removing the shroud of mystery in which sleep and dream are wrapped up discovers the absolute Reality manifesting itself as Life in the three states familiar to all. By a flawless reasoning it shows sleep laying bare P. C. which through ignorance is looked upon as mere negation. For our intellect is chiefly concerned with the waking activities of life, which are completely stilled in sleep, and is not by its nature fitted to comprehend the timeless Reality.

PURPOSE OF ENQUIRY

An objection may possibly arise as follows:—If sleep is P. C. and the ego as well as the non-ego is identical with it in essence, then we ought to realise the highest bliss and obtain salvation by simply inducing eternal sleep upon ourselves. By means of drugs we can achieve this object without the aid of religion or philosophy. This notion is mistaken. We, as well as the world, are the Reality itself. But this *fact* does not help us to avoid the ills of life or to secure its joys. To attain the highest felicity to which our nature is entitled we must possess a *knowledge* of the fact. A may have a rich legacy left him by B in his will. But this fact would be of small service to A until he comes to *know* of it. Similarly we *are* divine in our highest nature, but all our faculties must be exerted to convince ourselves of the truth before we claim the privileges of nature. As sleep is not a state conducive to enquiry and as the latter demands the exercise of the subtlest powers of reflection, it is futile to seek for the saving knowledge in any other state than that of waking; for ignorance or knowledge is possible only in waking. Neither sleep nor death can without self-knowledge lead to emancipation.* Life will re-impose the world with its woes on the untamed will of the unenlightened soul, as it does everyday. We cannot surreptitiously enter the Home of Peace with selfish greed unpunished or with affirmation unextinguished.

The world, as commonly understood, is the objective portion of our experience, spread over infinite time and evolving itself without a break in an orderly manner. We come into touch with it only in our waking mood so that, in our notion of the world, sleep and dream are totally excluded. We speak of the latter states only when our attention is drawn to them, but when we think of the world as a whole, they do not enter into our calculations at all. This is but right so long as we assume that waking life is the whole of Reality. But, whereas we enter the waking world as

* Gita IV. 38.

aliens dealing with objects outside of us and mysterious in their nature and origin, we retire into ourselves to experience sleep and dream. To us, therefore, the world is not the centre of life in the same way as our own self. For, it is we that experience the three moods, and the world which is the sphere of our activity is but an appendage to one of them, *viz.*, the waking, with which, to us, it appears and disappears. When we refer to the continuous existence of the world we still must acknowledge that its continuity is affirmed only from the waking standpoint. Thus, whereas the world can be comprehended within our moods, the latter cannot be, by any stretch of imagination, brought within the precincts of the world. The problem of philosophy, *viz.*, the explanation of Reality or Life as a whole, becomes soluble only by the method of Vedanta which, convinced of the futility of attempts to seize upon the life-principle through an analysis of the world, however scientifically carried out, turns back upon the moods of the self in one of which, *viz.*, waking, this great world is presented to an admiring intellect. To the empirical view even the conception of Life as a whole becomes impossible. When philosophers talk of the whole of experience they evidently apprehend only a part of it leaving out consciousness, sleep and dream altogether from the range of their vision. This must be ever so, as sleep and consciousness cannot be objectified, but only intuited.

Vedantic dialectic based on life and experience can now be summed up. Sleep, dream and waking are independent experiences. Each is reality in its entirety, is an expression of the real. But the world and the egos appearing in each have a real value only within the state and none beyond it. Although the dream-world is stultified now, it was real at the time, our sense of reality having since passed on to the present waking world. Hence the dream-world is regarded as a mere hallucination while waking life is looked upon as unquestionably real. This reality, however cannot be the ultimate reality, since waking life is but one expression of life which runs through all the three states. The highest reality is to be found in the P. C. of sleep which is usually identified with unconsciousness. But the fact is that while P. C. remains entire and unchanged throughout the three states, yet in waking and dream it splits itself up into subject and object; and waking and dream must derive their genesis from P. C. alone, as apart from it there is and cannot be any other reality. Every integral part of the world is indeed this indivisible P. C. We, as well as every object mental or physical, are, in ultimate essence, but P. C.

Distinctions and individualities, so real and necessary for practical life, dissolve without a trace in the one secondless P. C. The world is not a creation but a manifestation of P. C., an expression of Life. Creation of new forms and evolution are the characteristics of waking life. The omnipotence of P. C. guarantees both unforeseeable novelty and methodical development, as its powers to manifest itself in infinite variety, are unhampered. P. C. is the Absolute and, being beyond time, cannot be drawn into relations with any other. There is no other reality of the same degree. Waking comes to an end in sleep and sleep in dream or waking. But Pure Consciousness is invariably present in all, in the shape of the dual world perceived in waking and dream, and in its own immediacy in sleep. Sleep, therefore, is not a manifestation like Waking and Dream. P. C. spreads itself as the water of the sea on which two ships float. It is like the open surface of the sea uncovered by the ships, and is actually the water that supports the ships themselves. Our so-called memory of sleep is possible only through our being of the nature of P. C. In fact it is P. C. itself. The ego and the world can thus take rank only as realities of the second degree, for manifestations are real only within their own particular spheres. We cannot question why P. C., ever constant and changeless, should optionally manifest itself or retract into itself; for, P. C. is beyond time and causation, and the question in the face of experience is idle. If still the intellect persists in establishing a relation between Reality and its manifestation its endeavour proves futile as P. C. ever remains invariably the same. Consider, for instance, what happens when we think of Consciousness. Consciousness then becomes its own object, but without parting with an iota of its own entirety as the invariable subject. In Vedanta the wildest dream of the philosopher is realised. The search has been for the absolute, the unrelated, the invariable, existing by itself known by itself, yet somehow connected with and accountable for the dual world and life therein. The deepest instinct of man has been ever active under a fixed belief that no human intellect can endorse and no failure can extinguish. Great thinkers could not succeed in reaching the goal however far they travelled; for they chose the wrong path. They searched in the field of waking alone. The right road takes us straight through the three states and leads us to P. C. of which philosophers and theologians have so long been in eager quest.

SUBJECT AND OBJECT

We have remarked that the subject or the ego does not admit of the plural, yet we recognise in life a plurality of egos or

subjects. This arises from our objectifying the subject, which is philosophically wrong. How can we explain such a tendency? Now, can an object be pluralised? Here are a chair and a table. We speak of them as two things, for if the chair is removed or lost the table is left unaffected and *vice versa*. Plurality, therefore, implies an absolute independence of the things enumerated. Are the chair and the table then so absolutely independent of each other as to allow of the one existing unaffected while the other vanishes into nothing? At first it would appear that such is the case, but reflection would show that these entities are not separable. Every object in the universe is so related to all the rest that its existence by itself could not be conceived if all the rest were spirited away. The chair and the table have no existence apart from the wood of which they are made, the wood apart from the tree, the tree from the soil or earth on which it grew, the earth from the sun, and the sun from the stellar systems. All objects as parts of the universe are so inter-related that an atom, no less than a great system, cannot exist without implying the existence of the rest. A part exists by means of the whole and the whole by means of the part. The entire universe represents one Reality, indivisible, entire. But even such a universe is cognised only through our consciousness. It has a relation to the latter by which it is turned into an object of thought or consciousness. The objective world must ever presuppose a subjective consciousness and *vice versa*; with this difference, that, while consciousness can act only as a whole even when it is taken up with the contemplation of the smallest division of matter, and only as a whole can move from division to division, the universe allows of being presented to consciousness either in bits or in aggregates; that is to say, while the universe is composed of inter-related parts consciousness must ever remain entire. Putting aside this difference, however, we observe that consciousness and the external world are correlates and the one cannot be sundered from the other. Though opposed in nature they are yet interdependent. Each exists for and by means of the other. They cannot therefore be looked upon as two separate entities or as two independent realities. Their invariable correlation points unmistakably to a higher reality behind them, from which they spring, in which they are reconciled*. From mere speculation we may determine the nature of this higher reality from which both the subject and the object originate. It cannot be, evidently of the nature of either the subject solely or the object solely, for in

* "I am the food and the eater"—Taittreya Upanishad, III. 10.6.

either case it cannot give rise to the other element.* To be the source of both, it must be neither subject nor object. Hegel calls it self-consciousness. His genius enabled him to arrive at this idea but it remains a mere speculation. We feel the need for its confirmation in life, in experience. Vedanta verifies the truth by reference to experience. She points to our intuition of P. C. in sleep and pronounces it as the highest reality. In P. C. we have both the elements of empirical experience, the distinctions of ego and non-ego, the self and the non-self, subject and object, completely abolished and dissolved in transparent unity.

Although P. C. is not describable in terms of the intellect its nature can be comprehended to some extent from the following. First, it is not an intellectual abstraction, but Life itself giving rise to the intellect on the one hand and the world on the other. Secondly, it is unfettered by the subject-object relationship. Thirdly, it is pure being in the sense that no concepts can reach it, and no attributes be predicated of it. Still, it is the highest reality of which empirical life is but an expression. Fourthly, it is pure bliss, for, the feeling of felicity experienced during sleep, with the memory of which we wake, is accompanied by no memory of a second thing or object from which it arose, whereas the joys of empirical life are to be traced to external objects. As this feeling is uniformly associated with sleep it only testifies to the immutable nature of P. C. as being pre-eminent bliss. The instinct of self-love with which we all act consciously or unconsciously in life only reveals the loveability of our self as P. C. It may degenerate into selfishness but its origin is holy. Fifthly, it is supremely void of all grammatical distinctions of Person. It is neither He, She nor It. Yet, as the source of all it can with equal propriety be spoken of as a personal or an impersonal Being. It transcends speech. Since the self or the ego must somehow be regarded only as a person, P. C. also becomes invested with personality. It is then our God or Goddess, Shiva, Vishnu, Uma, Jehova or Allah. As the Creator, Sustainer and Dissolver of the Universe, He is our Heavenly Father, Love itself, for no other emotion can be associated with a Being who is all Bliss and who is the moral prop of our life. He is Beauty, Truth, Immortality and Righteousness. Yet, again, He is not different from us or from the universe, for all are in Him and we live, move and have our being in Him. Sixthly, He is neither act, nor energy, nor change, neither static nor dynamic, but the inexhaustible store-house of all

* "One effect cannot be the self of another," (because subject and object are both effects alike of P. C.)—S. B. I. 2.27.

activities and the root-principle of life, eternally remaining unaffected by them. For, we daily experience the identical P. C. in sleep which undergoes no modification for all time. He is not an organism, liable to growth, decay or death; but organic life is a phase of His manifestation. He is not the individual soul exposed to a hundred sorrows or to a succession of lives. On the contrary, He has no individuality but is Joy for ever. He does not evolve but is the principle of evolution, directing it, though still remaining beyond its sphere. There are no happenings in Him but He is at the bottom of all happenings and the guide of the world-process. His absolute freedom enables Him to reveal Himself in the form of acts or events as well as in the form of states for life-purposes. "He so loved the world that he sacrificed his only son for its redemption." He loves the world for He *is* the world. Manifestation is a free act of His and He does not forfeit His freedom thereby. While manifesting Himself as the world, He yet remains apart from it, unchanged as the eternal Witness. He is thus both immanent and transcendant. As the Absolute, He is free from all relations to the world.

Again P. C. is not non-being, because we can have no experience of non-being, but we do experience the peace and bliss of P. C. in sleep. On the contrary, it is the substrate of all being in time. It is not unconsciousness, being the root of waking consciousness. The objection, that in sleep we are not aware of subject or object, and therefore that it is an unconscious state, contradicts itself, for, we *are aware* of not having been aware of anything. Besides, although empirical consciousness requires an object that it might function, it does not follow that P. C. should be similarly fettered with an object. The very objection proves the contrary. We are not aware of any object simply because we are then absorbed and identified with P. C. If it is possible for consciousness to exist without an object or subject, it can do so only in the form in which it is presented to us in sleep.

If experience or life discloses one incontrovertible truth it is this, namely, that subject and object are eternal concomitants. The one cannot be experienced without the other. If, therefore, there can be a principle of consciousness which excludes the one, it must necessarily exclude the other also. An objectless consciousness must be divested of the subject also. Now we have just these conditions fulfilled in sleep. In it we have no differentiation of ego and non-ego, and as it is actually experienced, this is possible only on the basis of a persisting principle of consciousness, free from duality, *viz.*, P. C. To assert that it is unconsciousness because we

are aware of nothing in sleep is to require P. C. to behave like the empirical consciousness, which would be a contradiction in terms. P. C., also, is not unconsciousness for the unconsciousness observed in a stone never develops into consciousness. Again, unconsciousness is to us inconceivable. But it is the P. C. of sleep which transforms itself into the dual elements of waking life, *viz.*, Empirical Consciousness and the world. At the same time, P. C. remains as the changeless witness enabling us to intuit the three states. Hence these two facts must be borne in mind in connection with our study of sleep. (1) We are not unaware of anything. We *are* aware of not having been *aware* of anything. (2) We wake with an impression of peace and felicity experienced in sleep. The empirical law which requires the cause to be exhausted in the sum of its effects does not apply to the nature of P. C. It is absolutely free as the substrate of all laws. We are here dealing with facts of Life; and experience presenting a new fact cannot be condemned because it does not conform to observed laws. On the contrary, the so-called laws must be modified or set aside so as to harmonise with the new fact. The laws no doubt hold good where they operate but they cannot force into their dominion what transcends them or is a necessary condition of their operation. The so-called intellectual contradiction is a mere will-o'-the-wisp and need not disconcert those that seek the reality behind the intellect.

PRACTICAL VEDANTA

P. C. is the real kingdom of God and *what is the kingdom but God Himself?* (Sankara). Its vastness is comprehended only in waking. But sleep reveals our essential nature by removing the obstacles in the way of our comprehension of it. But sleep cannot produce knowledge for lack of the instruments, *viz.*, the intellect, etc. Release, therefore, must occur only in waking when alone knowledge is possible. Then we realise our self by acts of self-denial and self-sacrifice. The life of the Released is full of bliss arising from a consciousness of the higher Reality which manifests itself as the sphere of acts and thoughts in which he realises it. Sleep is like a treasure-vault but the treasure has to be conveyed out into the light of day, to be appreciated and enjoyed. So also has the P. C., disclosed by sleep, to be realised in waking as our true nature and recognised in every act and thought of waking. Religious trances only confirm our sleep-experience and are not indispensable to knowledge. Knowledge aims at purifying the will by disinterested acts and complete conquest of the lower self. Hence it requires waking activity.

The non-ego is, by our conquest of the ego, at the same time converted into God and the ego is overcome in every act of unselfish discharge of duty and service. The words of Jesus "Take up thy cross and follow me," can bear no other comment. The words mean, engage in acts of self-denial, regardless of temporal considerations and, with me, the highest reality, as your guide and goal.

With Release all questions of further bondage vanish. The *Samsara*, the cycle of births and deaths, with its viscissitudes of suffering and enjoyment, is no more.* Death is conquered *in life* and by life.† The fate of the physical body is indifferent to the enlightened, for he has accomplished the purpose of his embodiment. He has realised the immortal bliss which is the birthright of the soul. As the eternal Witness of the states of the soul, he has attained everlasting Life, rather he becomes it; and the woes or joys of physical existence like those of dream cannot affect him. He loses his separate being in the contemplation of the Being of Beings whose manifestation he discerns in all.‡ Empirical life is valuable to him only as holding up the mirror of his own pure untainted nature. When organic life dissolves, he returns to the higher life from which every manifestation has emerged, from the darkness of phenomenal existence to the light of Pure Consciousness, from death to immortality.§ Salvation is thus effected for every man by himself. P. C. appearing as intuition is the Christ in us. He never forsakes us. To realise Him we have to sacrifice our lower nature, the selfish attachments which bind us to the manifestations. This sublime intuition comes from a timeless region and is therefore, immaculate in its birth. For, it comes directly from Pure Consciousness, whereas, every other element of our life has to be traced to the intellect whose judgments are, though valid for active life, tainted by the narrowing influences of time and space. The larger life is the Christ, and is one with God. "I and my father are one", and when the lower nature is crucified, Christ ascends uninjured to heaven, the King-

* "The embodied is subject to pleasure and pain, not the disembodied." — Chandogya Up.—VIII. 12.1

† "Knowledge has not to wait for the body to fall." -S. B. I. 1. 4.
"He enjoys Brahman here "—S. B. IV. 2.13.

‡ With the knowledge of Brahman, which is both the higher and the lower, the knots of one's heart are cut asunder, all one's doubts are destroyed and one's actions (selfish) cease—Mundaka Up.—II. 2. 9.

§ In its presence the sun shines not, neither the moon, nor the stars. The flashes of lightning do not shine. And what of this fire! All that shines shines only after it, and all derive their light from it—Mundakopanishad —II. 2. 11.

dom of God, to P. C. which is our essence. This is the only way to salvation. "I am the way, the path, and except through me none shall pass within the gates of eternal life."

Also, external Nature is perfectly innocent and bears the stamp and superscription of divine power, beauty and beneficence. It is no evil to be rid of. Things from outside do no harm. It is what springs from inside, the host of selfish feelings, envy, malice, avarice, lust, it is these that work the ruin of the soul. It is the heart that has to be purified and fitted to be the throne of God. Sense of individuality leads to the sense of evil. Christ has not referred to Karma and Rebirth, probably because he has placed the highest truth before the world, *viz.*, the Vedantic doctrine of the utter negation of all else than P. C. In an empirical sense however future births like the present are assured to the unenlightened soul, as necessary for its perfection and purification.

It may be observed that sleep simply means our ignorance of the real nature of Pure Consciousness. Hence according to Vedanta Knowledge, which brings about Release, begins with the recognition that P. C. is the only reality. It may be asked whether this knowledge can nullify the effects of nescience, *viz.*, dream and waking. This question presumes their existence as transcendental realities, which is untrue. As they are only appearances or contingent manifestations, they neither exist nor can cease to exist in the same sense in which P. C. is reality. Hence the comprehension of the ultimate truth must put an end to all doubts and difficulties relating to appearances.* In dream it is true that when we recognise it as such it immediately changes into waking, though sometimes it might continue without our being able to alter or end it. But dream and waking are empirical realities, realities characterised by time, space and causation, and appear to possess different degrees of reality, the lower vanishing by being merged in the higher. A dream besides is equivalent to nothing when contrasted with waking, but is not absolute nothing. For we remember the dream. In the light of P. C., waking and dream are both absolute non-entities. Hence they neither exist nor can cease to exist in the higher sense. Says Goudapada: "Prapancho yadi vidyeta nivarteta na samsayaha, Maya matram Idam Dvaitam Advaitam Paramarthataha". "If the world existed it would no doubt disappear. All this duality is only Maya. In reality it is non-dual".†

* The world's dissolution at the disappearance of nescience is metaphysical. —S. B. III. 2. 21.

† "Where one sees another, that is small"—S. B. I. 3. 8.

Ignorance and Maya have an import only in the sphere of the intellect. They are meaningless in the life of P. C. Hence when ignorance ceases there is no new feeling as of the cessation of anything real. The truth is, the nature of Release transcends imagination. With the disappearance of ignorance we rise to P. C. beyond all cognition and feeling. But Release is not a state to which we rise. It is what accompanies us as our very nature. Neither can we ever fall from it. Though we might feel ourselves surrounded by delusions, in truth there are no delusions. To the fallen state change is natural. To a fallen soul changelessness must therefore appear undesirable. But the peace of Reality is beyond the conception of the fallen soul. The nature of P. C. cannot allow of a second thing being placed by its side. Empirically, indeed, the released might perceive the world, but he has at the same time the saving knowledge of non-dual Reality. The latter overpowers the former and stultifies it. On the other hand, nothing can be conceived to stultify the oneness of P. C., as its absence or sublation is beyond conception. Besides, the notions of time, space, cause or reason have a meaning only when they are used in relation to other things. But applied to themselves they stultify themselves, showing thereby that they are unquestionably the inevitable forms of thought. Philosophical writers have been fertile in errors by looking upon space, time, etc., as independent things. When did time originate? Where does space begin? What is the cause of causality? These are meaningless questions. P. C. as the substrate of thought cannot be stultified by anything else, and while the world presupposes consciousness, consciousness itself admits of no other prius. To understand the nature of Release we have to bear in mind the absolutely destructive nature of the Avasthas. For knowledge is opposed to ignorance as waking to dream; and as the destruction of the latter is complete at waking, so all the effects of ignorance must vanish with the rise of wisdom. The released condition being not of the nature of an empirical state, there cannot be even memory or expectation to survive ignorance.*

Life presents only three-states, and since these as such cannot be other than what they are, the reality detected as spanning the three arches of life is the highest reality. This truth, relating as it does to what is timeless, is also beyond the ravages of time.† In other words, it is as final as infallible. The nature of the states

* Mundaka Upanishad II. 3: 2 and 3.

† Knowledge reveals the fact that the soul was, is, or shall be an actor or enjoyer in none of the three divisions of time, past, present or future. It has always been and will be Brahman.—S. B. IV. 1. 13.

also is not liable to change as they are not occurrences in any one time-series which may be subject to future modifications, but as wholes they transcend time and its dominion.

We shall here dispose of a few other states commonly included among the states of consciousness, *viz.*, (1) the mesmeric, and (2) the religious trances, (3) swoon, (4) death, (5) future life, (6) Release. We may observe that none of these is a common experience such as we can refer to as a fact familiar to all, like sleep, dream and waking. A mesmeric state may be of the nature of either sleep or dream. For philosophic purpose it is not a new state requiring separate consideration. So also are the religious trances and swooning. Death is the state always regarded as of another ego, and it cannot be examined like one experienced by oneself. Besides, however real it may be in one's waking life, death is cognised as a fact only of waking. Hence it must be included among the events noticed in that state as affecting another ego appearing and disappearing with it. When one sleeps he has shuffled off the coil of the waking body and gone beyond the reach of waking occurrences. Lastly, Release is simply the recognition of oneself as P. C. which can happen in every dual state, dream or waking. It is not therefore strictly a state, for a state is only a manifestation of the real. As to the future states of life they are a moral necessity in the case of the unawakened. They must, however, be only matter for imagination and unreasoned belief or pure faith, though all the same they may be as real as the three states with which we are conversant. The enlightened has no further bondage and to him the question of death or future birth has no meaning.*

* "That Thou Art" cannot be interpreted to mean "Thou wilt become That after death." The result of Knowledge is immediate, of Karma, mediate and problematic.—S. B. III. 3. 32.

CHAPTER IX: INTUITION OF PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

GOD AND THE WORLD

IF then I am God or P. C. why do I not feel myself possessed of divine powers, but experience my limitation every way as an ego. The question arises from the point of view of a finite individual whose powers are naturally crippled by being associated with the intellect and the senses. It is these that bind the free spirit. If one realises his godhead he must divest himself of these finitising clogs, but then the question cannot crop up, as power or powerlessness implies duality alike. The truth is, we cannot intellectually conceive a relation between P. C. and its manifestation, the world. Neither should the question of the cause or origin of the states trouble us, since causation is restricted to the same time-series, and the states are beyond it. Their plurality is an anamoly inexplicable in terms of time or the intellect.

In the words of Jenkins, cosmogony has puzzled the greatest thinkers ancient or modern. The reason is plain. While the processes going on in the world obey the laws of conservation and relativity, while nothing can exist absolutely by itself, while nothing can be conceived to originate from nothing or pass away into nothing, while no cause can preserve its integrity after it has distributed itself in its effects, the first cause must be thought of as free from all these limitations, which would be contrary to experience. Besides, by no such speculation can a God or the first cause be established transcending the world, yet giving rise to it. The theory of creation is more unintelligible than the world itself. We have in this problem two distinct parts that have been wofully confounded. These must be clearly separated, *viz.*, first, the world in itself, and secondly, the world in its ontological aspect. In the former case the world is unquestionably a process, a development strictly obeying the laws of causality and relativity. You cannot find in the effect what was not contained in the cause, and the cause is exhausted in the sum of its effects. In the organic world, however, we observe ever so many new forms created every moment, and life exhibits an element of contingency. But the past is always describable in terms of the intellectual concepts,

and novelty and contingency characterise a present experience. When we endeavour to trace the world to an ulterior source from which it has sprung, like to-day from yesterday, we are committing a blunder, for the conception of the source and the product is the work of the intellect, and its sphere is confined to phenomena. Hence, while seeming to soar above the phenomenal world, we fix ourselves on the contrary the more rigidly therein. It is like proceeding towards the mirror to catch the thief who is seen in it running. The origin of the world must therefore be wrapped in impenetrable mystery. Vedanta admitting this adds that the mystery results from a fundamental mistake. Although the world exhibits development and change in itself, it has not, as a whole, issued from an extraneous entity, and its intelligibility or rationality cannot be pushed beyond its phenomenal aspect. The ontic aspect is beyond the plane of the intellect. Connecting the world as an effect with an unseen cause is to affirm the phenomenal nature of both, whereby we defeat our own purpose. The world is not a creation by an extraneous entity, but is the immediate manifestation of Reality, and this truth is not discovered by speculation but by an examination of the three states.

The P. C., which is one and undivided in sleep, suddenly and without an intermediate stage of preparation, manifests itself as the world of the waking consciousness, thereby baffling all the powers of human understanding, which is a slave of causality. In this way we see that the world is of the essence of Reality, though how Reality suddenly assumed the new shape, without impairing its own integrity, must be a lasting mystery.* We have here to deal with facts and no indulgence in theory or speculation is permissible. For, the plane from which we view the three states is transcendental, reached by intuition and not by the intellect. It may be asked whether P. C. can spend itself in its manifestation and yet remain unchanged in its integrity. But the question serves no purpose, for just such is our experience. I find, in my present reference to the P. C. of sleep, that it remains intact even now, at the time of my writing this, for consciousness and P. C. are both identical with my thought of them. Yet, I see myself surrounded by a world that can be traced to nothing else. In sleep, P. C. is secondless Reality. As to eating the cake and having it at the same time, this is indeed impossible in empirical life, which is ruled by the law of conservation, and is limited by the conditions of waking.

* Brahman unchanged is seen to have assumed the form of the ego.—S. B. II. 3. 17. and,
" In reality Brahman is changeless."—S. B. III. 2. 20.

P. C. is absolutely free from the bonds of time, space and causation, and its maintenance of its own integrity, simultaneously with its manifestation as the world, must be easily possible, as we so find it in actual experience. Inconsistencies and contradictions are fatal to speculation. When a fact is not ascertained we try to attain to truth by a strict process of reasoning: but when a fact has been indubitably established, we have but to accept it as we find it, in whatever way the intellect might account for it. A quarrel with fact is unprofitable. Till a few years ago, wood and human flesh were considered to be opaque to light. After the discovery of the X Rays we have had to admit that bodies opaque to one kind of light may be transparent to another. Facts have this supremacy over mere speculation. When the dualist states that God is independent and free, and yet possesses attributes, his inconsistency is indefensible, for every attribute that we predicate to God limits His powers and curtails His freedom. Even personality is not an exception. If, however, the dualist can prove the existence of God, this inconsistency may be ignored. But so long as God is a matter of faith or of mere speculation, the claims of logic cannot be lightly set aside. Vedanta is in a different case altogether. P. C. has been established as the only reality manifesting itself as the world without losing any of its essence. From the standpoint of the world, which desiderates an author of its own being, P. C. is God, creating it and guiding its evolution as presented in waking life. Besides, P. C. being the essence of our self may be rightly invested with personality distinguished by all holy and moral attributes. Thus God is in us, around us, is our self and the world.* He is the Principle of Salvation, as well as the Unconscious Will, ever active, ever creating new forms of life and beauty. Nevertheless, from another point of view which does not concern itself with an explanation of the world, P. C. is the highest Reality never changing, ever blissful—the spiritual magnet which, without itself moving, binds to itself by its boundless love all creation, animate and inanimate. The world with its unceasing change and unending development, locked up within the sphere of waking consciousness, is an infinite series of waking states, connected by space, time and causality, is the sphere of joys and sorrows, of struggles and triumphs, and is, as an appearance, a lower Reality. The higher, the absolute and the free, is still working through it as a power making for Righteousness, for Beauty, Love and Truth. We have thus a double nature. As embodied beings we are stimulated by desire for action. We have birth and death, but as P. C.

* "The world is *identical* with Brahman."—S. B. II. 1. 14.

all our imperfections entirely vanish and we find ourselves immortal and blissful.

INTUITION

We have mentioned in the foregoing the two mutually opposed aspects of Reality, *viz.*, those of changelessness and change. Mr. Woodroffe regards this feature as alogical, for the human mind cannot reconcile two opposite tendencies in a being at the same time. To him Reality or P. C. is a thing to be necessarily accepted or believed in, as it is the experience of souls that have attained to higher levels of spiritual experience. Such a view is repugnant to Vedanta which never claims to go beyond our common experience and which points to our condition in deep sleep as the most undeniable proof of P. C. It is on that unfailing and universal basis that Vedanta stands. Far from admitting alogical features, which may give license to every kind of fancy or imagination, Vedanta refers to actual experience, in its analysis of life. Take the empirical consciousness, for example, and see how it acts. In perceiving a tree, there is the tree as an external object and an idea of the tree is formed in the mind. We perceive the tree and conceive its idea. Now in perception the object, *viz.*, the tree, is distinct from the mind that cognises it. But the idea of the tree is created by the interaction between the subject and the object and is not distinct from the mind itself. It is a mental image corresponding to the external object and is of the same stuff as the mind or consciousness. Yet, it cannot be asserted that the mind has suffered any diminution or loss of its parts by its creation of the idea. The subject as the subject has remained absolutely unchanged, for when we next think of the chair the mind is quite ready to play the part of a pure unmodified subject to contemplate the idea, now, of a chair. When presently we try to envisage the nature of consciousness itself, what is the object? Why, consciousness itself. It is here itself the subject and itself the object. Yet, this idea of consciousness is not less real than the idea of a tree; for, while the tree as reality gave rise to the idea of a tree, so consciousness itself as reality is responsible for the idea of consciousness. To say that the objective portion of our cognition in our contemplation of consciousness is unreal, simply because there is no external source for the idea, is to deny our ability to know consciousness, and thereby to condemn and nullify all experience; for nothing is more certainly real than consciousness, and our idea of it is not an illusion unless we reject as inadmissible the evidence of consciousness itself. We

have, then, in the mental act in which we cognise consciousness as an object, consciousness alone serving in both capacities as subject and object. Indeed, our whole experience during that single moment is one of unified consciousness since the idea is ever of the stuff of consciousness itself. Only empirical consciousness being of the nature always to desiderate an object, it satisfies the law of its own constitution by converting itself into an object in the absence of any other. Otherwise it lapses into P. C. We may notice that, in the instance referred to above, the objective tendency of empirical consciousness is reduced to a minimum, and as its nature is to flit from object to object this condition of oneness cannot long be maintained except by practice and self-control or *Yoga*. Usually the attempt to fasten the same object on the mind for more than a short time ends in inducing sleep on oneself or in mystic experiences, which it is not in our province to discuss. But it must be noted that, while consciousness ever retains its own nature as the changeless subject, it can also play the role of an object at will to itself; and this we have to admit although the subject and object are in their nature diametrically opposed. It might appear a contradiction in terms to talk of the same thing as both subject and object. Yet experience familiarises such contradictions in life. Hence the function of Vedanta is not to reconcile the contradiction but to simply point to facts in life, howsoever they may be explained. An explanation may or may not be possible. But truths rooted in experience cannot be affected thereby. Vedanta abhors speculation, where the eternal interests of the soul are involved.

We shall now consider P. C. When we make it an object of our thought, as we do at this moment, we recognise it as what marks deep sleep. But we have to conceive it as a state or being, from which subject and object are both excluded, since such is our experience. The case is not analogous to the contemplation of empirical consciousness. In the latter case, it is consistent with the nature of empirical consciousness that we conceive it as the invariable subject and to present to it itself as its object, since every act of empirical consciousness demands an inevitable object. But it is different with P. C. To realise its nature, as intuited by us in deep sleep, our present empirical consciousness must divest itself of its subjectivity and be merged in P. C. itself, transcending the distinction of subject and object. That is to say, it must *become* P. C. Otherwise, the act of meditating on a unified state or being like P. C. would be unmeaning and impossible. Empirical consciousness like a caterpillar passes through the stage of

chrysalis and becomes the butterfly. It loses its individuality and becomes identified with the Absolute Reality, *viz.*, P. C. P. C. is the essence of empirical consciousness and is reached when the outer shell of subjectivity is broken through. In this act of mind we triumph over both the elements of limitation, the subject and the object, which are alike absorbed in their essence, P. C. Subject and object are inseparable, and the fate of the one at the same time seals the fate of the other.

Patanjali mentions contemplation on deep sleep as a method of attaining to the state of undifferentiated consciousness. This act of *Yoga* is commonly difficult and requires the mind to be detached from every object internal or external, suppressing every feeling and volition, and cutting off all channels of communication with the external world. This may be acquired by practice and the result would be, as in the case of concentrating on a single object, either sleep or mystic ecstasy. But the practice is not indispensable for the apprehension of the fact that P. C. is invariably present in every state. As already shown, the three states, though distinct as expressions of Reality, are not different in the sense that one is an addition to another. Each equates with every other. What presents itself as P. C. of deep sleep is identical with what manifests itself as dream-life or as waking life. As in the latter two manifestations we retain a memory of the P. C. of sleep, and as we appropriate the three states to ourselves, this self must clearly be not the ego of waking or of dream, but P. C. itself which runs as a thread through all, as the invariable basis. Two things become evident. The ego is essentially P. C. Otherwise we could not appropriate the states to ourselves. The non-ego is P. C. likewise; for, it is the P. C. of deep sleep whose place is taken by subject and object in the other states, and which returns unchanged to its own pure condition in our next experience of deep sleep. Thus P. C., while retaining its nature ever unmodified, manifests itself at the same time as the ego-non-ego elements of manifestation. In waking life the subject and object are of co-ordinate rank and the one cannot originate from the other. They ever appear as a correlated pair. But in the case of P. C. this necessity is superseded. It exists free, unfettered by the forms of manifestation, *viz.*, subject, object or time. Hence the latter must all be traced to one immanental, transcendental source, *viz.*, P.C. We conclude therefore that P.C. has, from the empirical point of view, two modes, static and kinetic, though absolutely it has no modes at all. A mode is but a time-view and P.C. is beyond time. In its static aspect it is the changeless Witness, synthesizing

the experience of the three states, while in its kinetic aspect it takes the forms of the ego and the non-ego. In attempting to explain why it manifests at all we pass from facts to the region of theory and speculation.*

N.B.—In deep sleep or even in the contemplation of P. C. we become unified with P.C. There is no question then of our leaving behind us an independent objective world. For, the world being inseparable from the subject completely dissolves in P.C., along with the subject or empiricial consciousness. The idea that other egos survive these individual states of ours, and that the world goes on, all the while unaffected, is true enough empirically. But the experience above referred to is a transcendental one, and being purely intuitive cannot find expression in empirical conceptions. It remains undisturbed by them and is independent of them.

* For, from the highest point of view there is no creation.—S. B. II, 1, 22.

CHAPTER X: PRACTICE AND REFLECTION

INTROSPECTION AND ENQUIRY

WHAT is the use of Vedantic Knowledge? Well, that depends on what one expects from it, one's own mental attitude. It may be presumed in general that it is bound to lead to all the beneficial results accruing from the conception of a universal religion backed by the most perfect philosophy. We realise the divinity in us. Freedom, bliss and immortality become inalienable rights assured to man. Our thoughts and acts are lit up with a new consciousness of the eternal presence of God in us. On the transcendental side we recognise our oneness with God himself, the Infinite Being who as P. C. is unchanged and unchangeable. On the empirical side He is our divine source of wisdom, power and mercy, who manifests Himself as the universe before us, whose throne is in heaven and whose footstool is the earth. His presence is felt in the countless worlds and systems that people the infinite space and His animating influence is seen in all the evolutions of matter that science, history and experience reveal, above all, in our own consciousness whose nature and power are beyond all that characterise the external world. We realise His incessant activity in our volitions and feelings, in our instincts and understanding. Our thoughts and acts are expressions of His will, are the ways in which we realise our oneness with Him. In all the Scriptures of the world the Vedantin recognises the same fundamental truths, the same principles of love and self-sacrifice, of charity and self-surrender, taught as the basic doctrines of every religion. His attitude is one of universal tolerance and sympathy towards all forms of faith. For he alone realises as no one else can, the rock-bed upon which they stand. He reads, in the glorious volume of nature spread before him, beauty, sublimity, and bliss; and life to him is the milky ocean upon which he floats and floating feeds. His mind can harbour no vicious intent or desire, for these spring from attachment to the lower self which he has already trampled down. He avoids no joys that elevate human nature, either intellectual, scientific or æsthetic, and courts no pain that he can well avoid. He interprets evil as the means employed by Life of reminding us of our higher

nature; and submits to it without a murmur, as to a salutary discipline whose aim is to wean him from transient and debasing pleasures and to set him on the road to peace that passeth the understanding. He has truly conquered death, for it has no meaning to one who cognises his identity with P. C. beyond all time and change. His love is unrestricted by considerations of race or denomination, for he sees God to be his inmost self manifesting Himself in the tiniest worm that crawls or blossom that blows.* In practical life its pragmatic value is incalculable. It imparts courage to the soldier, honesty to the merchant, loyalty to the servant, truthfulness to the historian, taste to the artist, judgment to the critic, fire to the orator, vision to the poet, justice and mercy to the king, and self-control and self-effacement to all. His interest in life, far from growing languid, has its edge sharpened by the Vedantic outlook. Pessimism which preys upon selfish souls can hardly dare to cross his threshold. His heart is ever dancing with joy. For, evil has been banished from the region of life, and immortality and freedom are his undoubted portion.

Gentile looks upon mind as act, as continual development. This is true but partially, as it relates to only one of its features. A passage in the Vedas makes reference to the evolution of P. C. and marks four stages.† In the first, P. C. splits itself up into subject and object and becomes the witnessing ego with the object opposed to it. In the second, it becomes the empirical consciousness set in ceaseless motion by impressions, feelings, thoughts, volitions, just as the objective world is ruled by uninterrupted change. In the third, it passes off into speech which is audible thought. During this process of evolution, P.C., while it remains changeless as the basic fact, does at the same time create and supply the energy required for the activity and determines its direction. It must be borne in mind that the witnessing principle admits of no change either, and in the midst of its continual activity it is yet as witness paradoxically static, since otherwise no memory can arise of past experiences. The empirical consciousness alone is kept constantly rotating like a wheel by feelings, volitions, thoughts and impressions till they find expression at last in speech and action. Every one of the latter manifestations includes and implies the former. In the case of the objective world P.C. is immanent in it. Speech presupposes empirical

* Gita V. 18.

† Chatwari Vaak parimita padani tan vidur Brahmanah.

Brahman develops or evolves in four stages and is known as the four stages of speech, as the sages know. P. C. the starting point of the evolution is itself one of the stages.

consciousness and the latter, both the witnessing ego and Pure Consciousness. For, the three former are but the manifestations of P.C., their eternal background. Thus Gentile's observation that the mind is ever acting holds good in regard to one phase of it.

But P. C. cannot be properly described as either active or passive. Though beyond all causation, yet in its manifestations it must to our understanding appear as a power originating activities in them. Attention to our own experience will furnish a justification. In the first place, speech which is audible thought is resolvable into concepts and would be impossible without them. The concepts again are the coins of the empirical consciousness representing the value of the objects perceived. As I am writing now, notions throng into my mind impelled by impressions, feelings and volitions, and this stage of thought precedes and must precede my writing activity. Simultaneously there is the winessing consciousness, which records in memory all that I do and think, without which there can be neither a plan nor order, method nor consistency in my literary work. The nature of the witness is peculiar. If we fasten our attention on it and watch a present idea rising to its notice, we arrest the idea-current and, when by force of will the idea under cognition is detained and not allowed to pass, the witness absorbs the idea into itself and the witness as well as the idea dissolve themselves in P. C.—Sleep or trance is the result. In deep religious meditation as in psychic moods, what brings on trance is the forcible stoppage of the normal current of thought and concentration on a single object or idea. Such phenomena bring to light the eternal presence of P. C., into which the patient sinks when the mental activity is suspended.

It has been observed that mental detachment is indispensable to Vedantic Knowledge. Now detachment may spring from contemplation on the dark side of human life, from actual suffering or from sights of woe; or it may spring from the concentration accompanying meditation. The Upanishads mention a number of methods in which a Vedantic student may practise concentration or the one-pointedness of attention. They are known as the *Adhyatma Vidyas*, each appended to a particular doctrine of Vedanta. The pupil is initiated into one of them by the teacher, who selects for him the *Vidya* suited to his stage and capacity. I shall make mention of one of them enjoying both popularity and esteem. It is known as the *Daharavidya*. Ordinarily, *Dahara* is taken to mean the small ether of the heart. Yet, here the pupil has to identify it as the ether in a hair-like tube supposed to lead away from the lower point of the uvula, and through it

vertically to the upper surface of the head, where it terminates in a point. In this tube the pupil has to imagine the senses, the mind, the ego and the personal God as located in ascending order. After assuming a steady posture and dispelling all distracting ideas from the mind, the pupil possessed of zeal and earnestness fixes his mind on the ether in this minute canal, first on the lowest point, then on the other points in succession, quitting the lower and ascending to the higher, only after steadiness has been attained by practice at each stage. The stations are at equal distances. Power of concentration is assured after the first stage is passed and the visioning of God or *Shiva-Shakti* is promised at the last stage. The pupil then finds himself merged in the undifferentiated glory and ineffable bliss of the Infinite Being. In other words, he becomes identified with all existence. The practice culminates in the attainment of *Samadhi* or trance. Many rise to *Samadhi* without effort. Nevertheless, Vedanta, whose one aim is the imparting of the saving knowledge, does not look upon *Samadhi* as either singly efficacious or as absolutely necessary for Realisation. This fact should not be forgotten, as many confound Vedanta with mysticism, which it essentially is not. It may not be out of place to add that the Hindu scriptures set a high value on this method of worship and meditation, specially suited to a Yogin. For common men, who cannot rise to this height, worship by symbols is ordained. Hindu idolatry, based as it is on this profound principle, must by those, that can allow for differences in intellectual capacity, be dissociated from all those revolting and debasing features that the very name usually calls up in unthinking minds.

The story of a man's life may be summed up briefly in these words. He sleeps, dreams and wakes. His whole life is a repetition of these states. This fact is so simple and obvious that it may not be considered worthy of any significance; yet Vedanta builds upon it its system of Truth and Reality. If Truth is to be attained and Reality comprehended it can be only by a study of Life unfolding itself in these aspects.* They are the three great gateways of knowledge, says Sankara. There is none other.

Waking life taken by itself is an inscrutable enigma. It presents egos and non-egos, mind and matter, in a world ruled by time and change. Neither mind nor matter is explicable by itself. The ego, our own self and the non-ego, the non-self, ever confront us continually, acting and reacting on each other, but still without disclosing their real

* Mundaka Upanishad—III. 2. 3.

nature. Life seems to be a drama enacted before us, sometimes comic, but invariably rounded with a tragic close. We are the actors, though we scarcely know how we came to be such, and we are deeply concerned in the progress of the drama, till we cease to play our part, when we make our last exit at the final catastrophe. The thread of life becomes invisible at death, passes into the unknown, seems to be snapped, and we know not where or when or whether it is taken up again. Our political and philosophic systems, scientific and commercial activities, our hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, struggles and triumphs—the poetry and the prose of life—illumine our individual lives for a time, and then all must yield to the resistless arms of death, must end in the eternal darkness and stillness of icy death. Oh, how miserable would be the fate of man, if death ended all and quenched for ever the divine intelligence of man, so shutting out from him the beauty and bliss of life. Religion, unirradiated by Vedanta, offers comforts indeed, but its promises cannot be vouchsafed by reason and make impossible demands on our faith. Science delights in a boyish contemplation of future triumphs and glories, but what can these be to the man whose existence is limited to three score years and ten. Perhaps even death may come to be conquered and all evil banished from life. This is the vista of hope held out by the wonders of science. But what becomes, meanwhile, of the individuals and generations without number that must continue to be swept away into the dreary region of death before the millennium dawns. And, what of the past souls since Adam? After all, man is a complex entity. Mere material comforts will not satisfy him. His moral and spiritual cravings transcend the sphere of the stars and the Milky Way. An amelioration in external life cannot touch the internal sea surging with desire and struggle; and a community of goods, as Dr. Johnson says, cannot ensure community of enjoyments. Tastes and capacities must differ, and competition springing from self-love must lead to unrest and dissatisfaction. Evil must prevail wherever there is divided will and aim. The mind cannot be handled like a machine and it is often difficult to control passions and volitions. Science might exercise some power over consciousness, causing it to appear or disappear, but no human ingenuity can avail to disclose the nature of consciousness. The possibilities of science are indeed unlimited within the region of consciousness, but science must confess its impotence to discover its nature. For the activity of science is conditioned by consciousness itself. This must be so while human nature lasts. Consciousness is not an

object and ceases to be itself when converted into an object. Thus our study of waking life furnishes no means of penetrating the mystery of life.

DREAM-EXPERIENCE

Proceeding now to dream-life, we find that the enigma is only thickened. All that we know of it is from the report of memory called into action during waking. How we step into dream land is shrouded from the intellect. We dream either soon after we go to bed, when a number of short fugitive visions flit before the mind, or after deep sleep is over and we are on our way to waking conditions.

In none of these instances can we notice the beginning, while the end is realised only when we wake and wonder at the perception of the sudden contrast. In the preliminary stages of sleep we might, if alert enough, observe the gradual lulling and closing of the senses, and images passing before our shut eyes. We are still conscious. But suddenly we jerk into dream and become unconscious. We are in a world cognised as real for the time being, and we behave quite as if we were awake. We perceive the presence of a body and the activity of our senses; we move and feel and nothing suggests the dream-nature of our experience. We behave as if our body lying still on bed had no concern for us. In fact, we are attached to a new one and we perceive things, though our senses are blind to the actual happenings around the bed. Without any feeling of surprise we find ourselves in a moment transported to a place, thousands of miles away, and our fears and joys affect us with all the force of waking realities. As in waking, so in dream we strive to protect what we look upon as our body at the time and are guided each time by a set of senses whipped into action. The mind itself shows no respect for the orderliness of waking and does not miss it. It takes the most grotesque occurrences as normal and as unquestionable realities. The act of the ego is equally unaccountable. While his real body is secure in the bed-room, the dreaming ego flies from fancied danger, encounters foes, fights, receives wounds, and before the tragedy is complete runs for his life till he awakes gasping and palpitating in bed. Can we say that the ego, the mind, the senses and the body of dream were identically the same as of waking? Yet, if the egos were different how does it happen that we own and remember the dream-experience. But a dream is an everyday-experience, and reason and logic turned topsyturvy is an everyday-fact. What is the solution? If a

dream is defined by certain marks, what is the test by which the correctness of the definition can be proved ?* We should be able to identify a dream as such by means of those marks while the dreamer dreams. But what is the truth ? When we are next adreaming our logic forsakes us, our marks fail us and our understanding betrays us. We are again befooled and the dream-spirit seems to enjoy a triumphant laugh at our philosophic complacence. The fact is, dream-life cannot be explained in terms of waking. The explanation offered by psychology is too inadequate. Thirst is advanced as the reason of a swimming dream. Hunger would cause the sight of a table filled with delicacies in dream. But dreams are not so reasonable as we think. They are whimsical in the extreme. The flightiness and unforeseeability of dreams make it impossible that the doctrine of suppressed desires could be an adequate explanation. After a heavy meal a man might dream he was cruelly starved, and might wake to find himself neither thirsty nor hungry.

Besides, such theories touch only the fringe of dream-life, if at all. How are the creations of the dream, the real images and their movement to be accounted for? I see a real ocean or hill, a tree with its waving branches, fruits and flowers. No amount of mere ideation can make one real blade of grass appear before my eyes, in all the freshness of reality. Although mental predisposition might seem to determine the character of a dream, our explanation is far from adequate, unless we can also explain the appearance of a concrete world of objects so like to those of waking as to be readily believed as such. What is the relation between the dream and waking objects? In my dream A makes a promise to me. After awaking can I expect A to fulfil that promise? Are the two A's identical ? If not, how are they related to each other? I often befriend a man in dream but wake to hate him. How are these two egos of mine related to each other ? I had been puzzled over a problem in waking and I solved it in my dream. How are the two intellects related? I am blind now. I recover my eyesight in dream. Which are these separate senses ? My body is intact in waking. Which was the body that was maimed in my dream ?

We seem to jump from the shore of waking on to that of dream but unconsciously, across an unknown sea bathing both the shores. We leave behind us the time-series and the co-existences of space of the waking state ; and we come into a new territory where the laws of causality governing all changes in

* Dream cannot be defined.—
Goudapada Karikas, IV. 67.

waking are either ignored or suspended or even reversed. The flow of dream-time is indefinite and variable, and we are treated to large stretches of space, while we keep lying in a narrow bed-room. Anything is possible. Thus the two states are absolutely unlike each other and are not connected by time. Yet they are not addable to each other in the sense in which we speak of two things in the waking state; for, in the latter the same time and space determine the position of things, whose plurality is thus comprehensible. But dream and waking as two states are inconceivable; for, they are not happenings in the same time-series or space like a fight and a game in waking. Being unrelated they cannot be added to each other. They are no elements of a number-system. There is no continuum to connect them. The more we think of them the more enigmatic they appear. Besides, a dream lives in memory while waking is ever present. Although with the aid of memory we distinguish a past dream from the present waking we could not recognise dream as such while it lasted, whereas our memory of past waking shows that we recognised it as such at the time. The present seems to be always a waking, and waking always a reality. It is impossible to define waking in any other terms.

Now, whatever use psycho-analysis can make of our dream-experience, Vedanta presses it into its service to discover the real entity, *viz.*, the Self. In waking, we are a conglomerate of the body, the senses, the mind and the ego, and we cannot eliminate the non-essentials from the essential portion of self. Dream precisely does this for us. The body, etc. are replaced, but the witnessing consciousness remains. Hence the possibility of a memory of the dream in the form, "I dreamt a dream". Even the *I* of the dream may be different from the *I* of waking. But the witness, though denoted by the term *I* in each case, is the essence of the *I* and remains identical. Hence the deepest entity in us is not the *I*, but the witness, which is only temporarily associated with the bodies &c. of the two states and which divests itself of these external sheaths in deep sleep.

DEEP SLEEP

The P. C. of deep sleep is of the nature of bliss, and consciousness undifferentiated into subject and object. Sleep as an independent state is unconnected with waking, and the whole of reality then discloses itself in the form of P. C. Hence waking and dream-lives are but P. C. at bottom. The subject and object can be nothing else. P. C. can have neither form, attributes, nor change,

for, form and attribute inhere in objects, and change is restricted to the region of time. Individuality and the world vanish in P. C. It may be objected that a man only ceases to perceive, but the persistence of the world is not affected thereby. The answer is, when the world being a correlate of the mind cannot exist, when the mind ceases to operate as in deep sleep, to imagine that mind and matter both persist in sleep, however subtly, only betrays the bias of the dual life, which casts all existence in the mould of the inevitable correlates, subject and object. Besides, it is our sense of individuality that demands a corresponding objective world, but, as individuality cannot breathe in the region of P.C., the question of a separate world persisting cannot logically arise. When we return to waking, practical life requires that we assume that the world with its plurality of subjects and objects, now presenting itself to our perception, did continue to maintain itself independently.

The P.C. which we intuit in sleep is not confined to one state, but is eternally the ground of every manifestation. When we wake from sleep we remember there was neither subject nor object in sleep. Now this memory implies a witness that remains unchanged through all the states, for memory must contain now an element that was present as a witness of the past. Otherwise there would be no reporter of the past. In the case of sleep-memory, the witness is not the ego, for no ego existed in sleep, and memory reports so. Hence, we are forced to recognise that the witness in this case is P.C. itself. It is P.C. alone that now in the shape of memory speaks of the past sleep.*

* Mandukya Upanishad II. 6 and 7, Sankara's commentary.

"This self in sleep is the Lord of all. He is omniscient and all-pervading". Sankara and Goudapada comment on these and similar passages of the Upanishad to the following effect: –

The same state, when looked at absolutely, (*i.e.*,) without relation to the other states, is Turiya (or 4th) and is transcendental, while in relation to the other states, sleep is regarded as the causal condition. Turiya is defined negatively because it is not additional to the three states, but is identical with each when we abstract from its predicable qualities. If Turiya were something beyond the three states, then since they exhaust all life we can have no door of knowledge open to us. Hence, all teaching about Turiya would be void of meaning and the Vedas would inculcate Nihilism. Sleep realised as P. C. is Turiya which is eternally all-seeing. Seeing the unreal is Dream. Not-seeing at all is Sleep, but seeing the Real is Waking. Atman wakes from its long sleep when it realises its oneness.

CHAPTER XI: IDEALISM AND REALISM

THE WHOLE-IDEA

THE conception of the universe as a whole is fundamental to the true conception of Reality, but so long as we keep within the limitations of the intellect we cannot rise to the whole-idea. Our common notions of a whole and part are empirical since every whole is temporally or spatially conceived. This is the fertile source of all such illusions as a block universe and an infinite movement. The former is rightly condemned as it cannot explain the novelty of every successive moment of life, life's creative activity, and history which implies and accounts for real change. On the other hand, infinite movement, without an underlying principle that sets the line and the direction, and without an ultimate end towards which all creation moves, would be utterly blind and purposeless, making it impossible to say whether evolution means progress or repetition or even retrogression. Pure chance and chaos would then be dominating factors, a state against which human reason and emotions would alike revolt. Besides, how could chaos give birth to reason? How could an eternal movement bereft of logical significance implant desires not meant to be fulfilled? In the scheme of life, desire instead of being followed by fulfilment already presupposes it. Hence to say that life is freely creative and that the future is unpredictable is to exult in a freedom which can have no moral, æsthetic, or religious value—a clean negation of all such freedom as alone can interest or be claimed as the birthright of an intelligent being. Hence, when Bergson opposes tooth and nail both the mechanistic and finalistic views of life's movement, he seems to be overshooting the mark. While the purely intellectualistic explanations take no notice of real time or duration, his crusade against all application of reason is laying the axe at the very root of philosophy, for philosophy seeks after a concept, an intellectual concept, that shall comprehend all phases of life, not excluding instinct and intuition, but none the less a concept of the understanding. To insist on the complete suppression of all intellectual activity is to run into the arms of mysticism and to strike reason dumb.

The idea of a block universe, on the other hand, implies a static Reality, reducing all movement, change and novelty to a mere illusion thereby. Change is the characteristic of life, and every moment is a new moment. Creation proceeds uninterrupted. To deny this is to deny that we have or can have any knowledge of life. Novelty and change are apprehended immediately by us. If this is delusion, why, Reality is itself a delusion. The conception that Reality persists unchanged can never be an adequate expression of Life which overflows with change and novelty.

But it is clear that neither the theory of the block universe nor that of pure change and nothing but change can have a real philosophical value, for in neither case is a true idea of the universe as a whole possible. The empirical idea of a whole places it outside the philosopher who conceives it, and cannot include himself who is the subject. From such empirical wholes external to the conceiving mind we cannot by any effort soar to the absolute whole which ought to leave nothing outside of itself. Whether all reality is regarded as dynamic or static, Reality in both cases is converted into an object opposed to the mind. And though one might swear at such an intention on his part, he cannot thereby transcend the nature of the intellect, which is primarily separative, not unifying; differentiating, not intergrating. "An isolated event", observes Whitehead, "is not an event, because every event is a factor in a larger whole and is significant of that whole".

IDEA OF CHANGE

Hence the question whether change occurs only within the sphere of Reality or whether it affects Reality as a whole from moment to moment is of paramount importance. In the first place, the ideas of *within* and *without* imply space; and change imagined to occur within Reality makes the latter conceived like a pot with its inside and outside. But the pot is an empirical fact, and hence when we use the expression 'within reality' our conception of Reality has not transcended the merely phenomenal round of things. This is to make no advance in philosophic thought. In the next place, nothing prevents us from imagining all existence as an infinite number of marbles in the pot with its mouth closed. The change inside is then simply the change in position of the marbles, which, though infinite by supposition, is still determinable in quantity as a mere potful. Their movement may arise from a shake given to the pot from outside or from an internal tendency in the marbles themselves; in other words, the movement among the marbles may be due either to a nature inherent in them or to an alien power

which has communicated it to them. Both these conceptions belong to the sphere of phenomenal multiplicity in space and can do no justice to real life which is not an eternal rearrangement of the same elements, but a ceaseless creation. Again, if everything within reality is changeable, it matters little to us that Reality remains unchanged, for all that can concern us will be involved in the vortex of change, so that in two different moments they are not identical. If indeed we are ourselves the Infinite, the Real, in that case, the change within Reality does not really affect us. For the retention of our identity with Reality must be eternal. On the other hand, if Reality as a whole is liable to incessant change, how will it interest us to know that Reality which is not the same in two successive moments, nay, how will it be possible to know it? The Reality which Plato was speculating about is not that which Kant pronounced unknowable, or that which Hegel by his dialectic of reason realised as the Absolute Ego. In fact, if Reality is not an eternally constant entity, philosophy shall have lost its vocation once for all. The history of philosophy would be a mockery, and all history would be deprived of a serious significance, when the great drama of life enacting before us is shown to be a series of disjointed pieces of representation without a plot, without a relation between the before and the after, without the oneness of idea that articulates through intelligent life in all the stages of its evolution. If Reality slips away from us every moment when we put forth our hand to catch it, and is not the same during any two moments, it will be void of any interest for us, in its pitiable helplessness to endure beyond a single moment. On the contrary, if Reality is granted to retain its identity as a whole through all time, then all change, duration, development, etc. should be confined only to the empirical life, to the sphere of the intellect and the senses. In our own experience we find that every-day the world, with its history, growth, change, progress and novelty, has a transcendental origin in the P. C. of sleep and dissolves in it without producing any change therein. Thus the manifestation as a whole is phenomenal or Maya. Besides, no change can be conceived that does not at the same time modify its basis (Sankara S. B. I. 1.4). Change is the impatience of Nature to return to its source, while thought is the impatience of the Ego to return to P.C.

Again, if Reality is resolved into movement and change, then Rest is not merely an appearance but illusion. There must be nothing answering to it in the constitution of Reality, and this illusion would itself have to be accounted for. If it is due to difference in the rates of movement as in the case of the railway trains, we are

again referred to an experience, from which the idea of rest is not excluded. The train which is at rest is set in motion. Further, why the rates in movement should differ at all would remain to be explained. If due to friction, how could friction arise in a world of secondless movement. Moreover, motion presupposes space, a vacant space, and Reality which is eternal movement should eternally rest in space and cannot include space itself. Above all, change and movement can be only either concepts or feelings presupposing in either case a witnessing consciousness. For movement is nothing, unless it is connected with two moments of time, and consciousness cannot cognise movement without memory to bridge up the intervals of experience. Hence, movement, presupposing consciousnes as it does, cannot be the true concept of Reality. It may perhaps be urged that consciousness, movement and even time are identical, and the difficulty is but fanciful. This is to ignore the nature of consciousness which as a witness kicks back every object from itself, and hence refuses to be identified with anything that is presentable to thought as object. Movement as a feeling or as an idea must necessarily be opposed to the subjective consciousness. To this we may anticipate an answer. Consciousness is a needless accompaniment of organic life, a bye-product of evolution, whose main concern is not with consciousness but with the vital activities of the organism. This is both ingenious and bold. But all the same it is an evasion, not a solution of the difficulty. It cannot stand a moment's scrutiny. Consciousness, far from being a useless product of life, that life could have dispensed with, is at the very foundation of life and is Life itself. Deprived of consciousness what is man, what is the world itself to him, what interest can the theory of evolution, from the lowest organism up to man, have for him? How can the theory itself have originated? All such speculation with its subtlety and originality would have been impossible to a man not endowed with that despised commodity. An unconscious being cannot reason about the secrets of nature, or distinguish between instinct, intuition and intellect. The portion of life passed in unconsciousness must be deducted from real life, which is rendered sweet and enjoyable by consciousness. With its disappearance all cognition, memory, feeling, judgment, experimentation, in fact all conscious activity necessary to scientific progress must vanish. If one can still say that nature existed before human consciousness arose and would continue to exist even after all consciousness became extinct, one plainly betrays his ignorance of what he means. For, such a statement, if at all, can have a meaning only to a consciousness.

CONSCIOUSNESS

To talk of Nature as if she could be wrenched away from sentience is to talk of a pure abstraction. There is no such Nature. Even to assert her existence requires a consciousness. Hence, with our mind constituted as it is, to talk of the independent existence of Nature points to a delusion too common to be easily cured. The very greatness of consciousuess lies in this fact that it fills all life and remains over as witness. If it were simply a dumb mirror, reflecting objects, affecting them in no material manner, we might dismiss it as a blunder of Nature, as a superfluous entity without a necessary function in the economy of life. On the contrary, every feature of life, will, feeling, judgment, is suffused with consciousness, the divine fluid which feeds and sustains them, in the absence of which life would wither up. Plants and lower organisms might be cited as instances of life, flourishing in spite of the absence of consciousness, except of course that of the one that cites them. But what invariably accompanies human life must accompany all life, though perhaps in too tenuous a form for our intellect. To deny the universal presence of consciousness you require consciousness itself.

The Realist rarely tries to imagine what kind of world he asserts to be independent of mind or consciousness. Similarly, the biologist seldom endeavours to conceive what the activities of life could be if consciousness were eliminated from life. A moment's thought will convince one that all conception presupposes consciousness, and that the world as a conception or as a percept absolutely draws its breath from consciousness. The Realist affirms the distinction between knowing and being, and therefore according to him the world, though depending on the mind for being known, has still an existence independent of it. Now, how is one to accept this truth, *viz.*, that the world has being, independent of the mind? The Realist argues that the mere inability on the part of the world to rise to our notice and claim its absolute existence cannot invest the mind, a mere means of perception, with greater significance than as a condition of perception. Man's cognitive power cannot create what it cognises. In the next place, no voluntary effort of the mind can call into being a real concrete object of experience. Hence the Realist concludes that to derive the world from consciousness is opposed alike to reason and experience. Further, perception presupposes a world, into which the perceiver is born, and of which he is but a product, just as it presupposes a perceiving mind, and the compelling nature of the realistic inference is acknowledged by the same mind that

presupposes itself before all perception. Hence, Nature precedes consciousness or at least is an independent reality of co-ordinate rank with it. Besides, if the world is a creation of the mind, is it of some particular mind or of all minds? Now a mind implies an individual. The world was in existence long before the individual man was born. It is thus absurd to trace such a world to one mind. On the other hand, it may be said that a number of minds combined to create the world. But as we do not notice that the world is affected at all by the appearance or disappearance of any number of minds or individuals, and stands as the same solid reality in the midst of the changes in the mental world, and as there is a uniformity in the apprehension of the world by all individuals, its independence is assured and the dependence of the mind, as an organ of perception upon Nature, can for the same reason admit of little doubt. Besides, the Realist might question "Why do I feel, when I see a thing, not only that it is real but also that it existed before I saw it and will exist after I cease to see it? Can I ever think away the world from my mind at any time, either in the past, present or future?"

That the mind and the senses should be so constituted as to deal just with a world, such as is perceived, and that the world is just such as can be perceived by the former—this predetermined mutual adaptation shows that they are meant for each other and are of the same degree of reality. Otherwise, whence this correspondence, whence the predictions of Science, with regard to occurrences in Nature, whence the joys of beauty? All values of life must be included in any higher reality we can conceive. Similarly, we must believe in a plurality of minds, individuals and spirits. Man starts as a helpless infant purely depending on a mother's care and protection, and his early years are liable to many accidents from which only the incessant solicitude of a mother can save him. The young of the lower animals are comparatively more self-reliant and start with a greater knowledge, as it were, of their relations to the world, and their instinctive adjustments to new conditions are indeed marvellous. The human child can only set up a lusty cry in its helplessness. As it grows older, the consciousness of its relation to the external world becomes more and more definite. The youth becomes aware of a hundred wants, and exerts himself towards their supply. Then he has his mating period. He cannot be happy without a consort. His existence is felt incomplete without a wife, and his sexual and social instincts come into play. As the gregariousness of sheep is deeply ingrained in its very nature and steadily develops

alongside of individuality, so man is social as soon as he becomes individual, and this implies the existence of other minds, working in other individuals, in identical ways. This plain man's belief in a real world of distinctions outside of himself is rooted in the common and indisputable facts of life itself.

Vedanta admits the force of the above considerations but points out at the same time their one-sidedness. A man's birth, growth, marriage and death cannot take place except in a world peopled with individuals like himself, besides other animate and inanimate objects. Nevertheless, it does not affect the position that life implies consciousness; and empirical life, empirical consciousness. The events that preceded a man's birth have, in order to be comprehended by him, to be presented to his consciousness now; and without such a relation to consciousness we can have no events to talk of. The common notion that an individual is born into an old world that was there from time out of mind and that consciousness had nothing whatever to do with bringing such a world into existence is admirable for its audacity, since the contemplation of an agelong world demands consciousness as a necessary prius.

But it may be urged that to know, to perceive, or to understand is entirely different from being or existing. Existence is one feature of a thing and does not entail its being known. To become known is to have come into relation with a mind. Now relationship presupposes at least the pre-existence of the terms related. Hence an object of nature must at least exist before it can start relations with a perceiving mind. There is thus a fundamental distinction between existence, which is an essential fact connected with a substance without any reference to a second thing, and being known by which an object shall have entered into relations with the human understanding. If, therefore, there was none to perceive the world before man was created what could prevent the world from existing by itself, which is not an act but a fact, and which is a necessary condition of its later appearance? Thus it would seem that the idealistic view which makes an epistemological circumstance an ontological criterion has not more to be said in its favour than the realistic view which endows things with an existence independent of human perception. Without consciousness the world would be formless. Without the world consciousness would be empty.

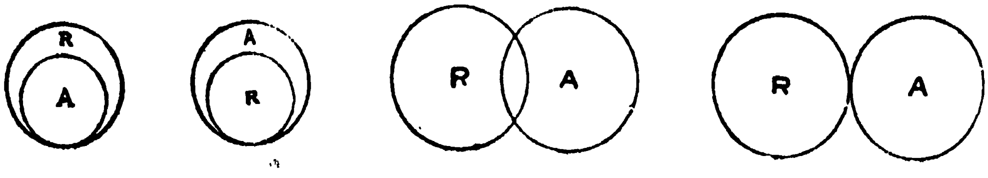
But it must be borne in mind that life never presents only one of these antithetical elements by itself, and the separation of the world from the mind, of the object from the subject, as if

they were independent entities, would have the effect of reducing each of them to a mere abstraction, an unreal phantom never met with in life. To call a thing an existant and pursue it beyond the percept, as if it hid itself behind it, shows just a predilection, a bias utterly indifferent to the implications, in favour of an entity imagined to exist as opposed to the human mind and independently of it. Of course consciousness cannot be traced to an unconscious origin. Hence an ontological problem arises which defies all attempts at solution. Metaphysics aims at discovering a single principle to which all the diversities of life can be referred back and by which they can be explained. If matter and mind cannot admit of unification the banter of the scientist is quite warranted. Monism is but a superstition, and unity a snare and a delusion. Life is irreducible variety. If there is a secret principle which brings about the differentiations, it is beyond the compass of the human intellect. Metaphysics stands thus condemned. Idealism is eternally confronted with irreducible matter and realism similarly with mind. Pluralism triumphs. Here a distinction must be made between Vedic Monism which is oneness of the higher reality and empirical Monism which is oneness of mind or matter. While the latter must ever be subject to controversy the former cannot by its nature admit of doubt or opposition.

THE TWO VIEW-POINTS

Now, it may not be unfair to question the Realist whether existence according to him precedes perception. How can one know that an object exists before some one has perceived it? Again, how can one perceive it unless it had existed? The Realist thus thrown inevitably on the horns of a dilemma. The fact is, we perceive a thing first and then argue about its previous and independent existence. That is to say, it is the perception that gives rise to the presumption of independent existence, on the basis of the unproven dogma that what is perceived must be existing by itself; for how can I perceive what does not exist? Now the relation between appearance and reality can be conceived possible only in four ways. For the convenience of enquiry we shall indicate them by means of the four following figures or logic-circles :—

I II III IV



As illustrative of these the following propositions may be set forth.

Fig. I. (1) All appearance is real.
(2) Some real things do not appear.

Fig. II. (1) Every real thing must appear.
(2) Some appearances are unreal.

Fig. III. (1) Some appearances are real.
(2) Some real things appear.
(3) All appearances are not real.
(4) All real things do not appear.

Fig. IV (1) No appearance is real.
(2) No real thing appears.

REMARKS

The relation shown in the Fig. I between appearance and reality is not true, since the implication that all appearance is real cannot be accepted. The mirage, the rope-snake and other optical illusions too numerous to mention are within the experience of all. Neither is the relation indicated by Fig. II true, for every real thing does not appear; for instance, consciousness. Fig. IV allows really no relation between reality and appearance, for they cannot co-exist. Fig. III alone is endorsed by our waking experience in which we find that they may co-exist; that is to say, some realities may or may not appear and some appearances may or may not be real. Hence the truth is deduced, that the mere fact that a thing appears cannot prove its reality. Reality must be based on some other ground than that a thing appears or does not appear. In other words, empirical reasoning cannot lead us from appearance to reality. Vedanta alone taking its stand on intuited P. C. can proclaim the great truth, *viz.*, that a real thing without a change in itself or loss of its integrity can give rise to the appearance of a Universe. While Reality remains one and secondless, it may appear to be opposed to itself as the second, though the second has no existence apart from itself, and is itself.

Views of idealism and realism, irreconcilable in their mutual opposition, arise from the incorrect and false conception of the whole-idea. So long as we confine ourselves to the waking state we cannot really conceive Life as a whole, as a combination of subject and object, for the simple reason that the subject in this contemplation slips behind the whole-idea which therefore becomes a delusion. In other words, the whole-idea cannot be conceived without combining subject and object. But

this combination is impossible, as the combiner is the subject himself, who cannot really have subject and object combined to form his object, unless he first annihilate himself. A similar delusion leads to a mental abstraction of the object from the subject, and assertion of its independent existence. It is not merely unphilosophical but unreal. For a world apart from the perceiving mind is an impossibility, a pure myth. Neither can the subject claim independence of the object. It is the existence of the object that confers existence on the subject. In other words, the subject and the object are interdependent, inseparable co-existences. Hence, in the true interests of philosophy, our view should not be restricted to the waking state, but must be extended over the dream and sleep-states also. Then we can readily experience the whole-idea. From what has been already stated the states of waking and dream are each an aspect of Reality, in which Reality is fully presented. That is to say, waking is metaphysically equal to dream and each of these again is equal to deep sleep. We can thus conceive Reality as a whole by objectifying to ourselves one state in another; when, for instance, we call up before our mind the dream or the sleep state now. Each of these, being a self-contained expression of Reality, when we objectify it (the state), we have the whole of Reality before us, and we may vary the process by imagining ourselves from the dream-state to contemplate the waking as a whole. Thus we escape the necessity of having to split up Reality and of hopelessy falling into the slough of incurable doubt as to the reality or the unreality of the external world. The phantoms of realism and idealism shall have been put to flight by the conviction that a world appearing as the correlate of the mind in a particular state is as real as the mind, as long as that state lasts. When the state disappears, the soul moves on to the next state in which the soul undergoes a fresh embodiment and finds itself ushered into a new world. Its newness is unrecognised then but felt like a continuation of the old. This change of body, much more subtly experienced than even a change of garment, is an incontrovertible proof of the soul being an entity independent of the body.

An objection may here be anticipated. In reflecting on one state from a point of view in another we have indeed the whole of Reality presented to us; but, then, is there not the same delusion, the same error of thought, *viz.*, of regarding the whole of Reality (including subject and object) as the object of the consciousness of the present state, the state of the observer?

It must be admitted that, so long as our mind is constituted as it is, the apprehension of anything must convert it into an object, and that Reality, no less than anything else, must conform to the law. In fact, modern thinkers have taken so little notice and allowed so little for the relativity of thought that they have gone to the extreme of thinking that the farther you move from your individual self the nearer you come to Reality. Hence, expressions like these have become current—objective truth, objective thought, objective validity, objective reality, &c. On the contrary, no view of Reality can be comprehensive that excludes one's own self, which is the only self that one knows immediately. An objective reality which excludes my self, an objective experience which is not related to me, is an abstraction. But although forced in a measure to regard even reality as an object of mind, the error is minimised when we contemplate Reality in one state from the standpoint in another state. For instance, we might change our thought-positions from waking to dream. We might imagine ourselves from a position in dream observing the whole of our waking Reality, or from the waking position we might contemplate dream-experience or dreamless sleep. Just as by changing his positions in space the astronomical observer gets different estimates of time and space connecting the occurrence of a terrestrial with a celestial event, and is able by comparing the results to make the correction necessary to arrive at the absolute truth, even so, our observation of the waking experience must be considered in relation to the other experiences ; and by varying our thought-positions a correct estimate of the truth of every state-experience has to be determined.

Applying the law of relativity to Life in its three aspects we find that each state is comprehended in its entirety only when we view it from a position in another, just as the figure of a mountain will be correctly perceived not by an observer on it, but by one away from it. To the former the eye's sweep will not be an unbroken line from end to end ; nor can he have a comparative impression like the latter, contrasting the particular mountain with others around or with the glacis and forest-plains below. Thus a true conception of the figure of the mountain is possible only to an observer looking at it from a distance, not to one on its top or side. Similarly, a comprehensive concept of Reality as a whole cannot be attained by envisaging it as it manifests itself in a present waking state. If a thinker like a layman by confining himself to it splits it up into subject and object he is unendingly involved in the insoluble problems of realism and idealism in all their monstrous

degrees and varieties. Reality ceases to be Reality when taken piecemeal. The empirical sciences proceed through analysis of convenient wholes of what is given in immediate experience, and they do not aim at referring it to a higher Reality. The current coins are sufficient for their transactions. They do not trouble about tracing the gold of the coin to the Australian or the African mine. The metaphysician, however, has to go further. It is his province to detect Reality in its infinite manifestations and determine its nature and relation to life and experience. It is of central importance, therefore, to the philosopher to discover the correct method and thought-position which alone could guarantee the realisation of his aim and purpose. The objection that after all our contemplation of dream in a waking state is only toying with a waking idea, is not valid, for the idea still of a whole-state and the truth that it really represents the whole-state cannot be denied unless dream-life itself is denied.

The value of the application of the doctrine of relativity to Vedantic study is incalculable. A number of doubts belonging apparently to an immortal race take birth in the mind of the enquirer when he endeavours to grasp the Vedantic position. They are, however, evidently the outcome of errors due to unconscious variation in thought-positions. Difficulties occur not because of any flaw or weakness in the Vedantic position but because we do not, after taking up the position, maintain ourselves in it even for a second. When these unconscious alterations in thought-positions are pointed out to the student it comes as a revelation to him, and he thereby gets a further and firmer foot-hold on the steps leading up to conviction. We cannot, therefore, be too cautious in avoiding the confusion of thought-positions. This truth may be elucidated by an illustration. A verse in Katha says, " That (P. C.) by (being) which one witnesses both the waking and dream-states (at the same time), that is the great, the all-pervasive. Knowing that to be (his own) self, a wise man never grieves ". (Katha Up. II. 4. 4.) In other words, a wise man never grieves, for he knows that the great, omnipresent P. C. is his own self, the P. C., by being which he witnesses both the waking and dream-states *at the same time*. A superficial reader may not realise the full significance of this passage. There is here a psycho-analysis carried beyond the utmost confines of the human intellect.

This thought-position is altogether different from that of the empirical psychologist. We shall try to show the inner, the esoteric meaning, which in ancient times was taught only to one who sought personal instruction. Notwithstanding all that has

been set down in books and writings, Vedanta can really be comprehended only by a course of enquiry carried on under the personal guidance of the teacher who knows Brahman and therefore who can resolve all doubts and difficulties. Vedanta is not speculation which, given a powerful intellect, can make unlimited progress independently of external aids. It is a new outlook upon life, a revealer and an interpreter of facts which, though common and universal, are opaque to the empirical understanding, but penetrable to the rays of the same intellect directed by intuition.

WAKING AND DREAM EGOS

Let us now analyse the thought in the above verse. A wise man overcomes all grief, for he knows himself to be identical with P. C. which is pure bliss. He obtains a knowledge of this identity by reference to his intuitive power to experience dreams. For convenience, let us distinguish the soul that is awake from the soul that beholds dreams. This distinction is empirically necessary, because, for the soul to dream is not to pass to a different region of the waking world but to lose touch with it altogether, to have new memories, new feelings, new bodies and senses, and new scenes, never previously visited nor to be ever visited in the future. We might look upon the dreaming ego as altogether distinct from the waking ego, except for one important fact. On waking we remember that we dreamt. Now how does this happen ? The waking ego never dreamt. The dreaming ego never woke. When I say therefore that I dreamt, my thought-position is in dream. I indentify myself with the dream-soul and appropriate all that I beheld in dream. But I am awake, and as the present waking ego, I am an altogether different individual. Neither in body, mind, nor senses am I the same with the individual I was then. Yet the identity is indisputable. This enigma can be explained only by realising that the point of identity is not either the waking or the dreaming ego, but a deeper element at the core, the metaphysical substratum of Life which is omnipresent and which, as Reality transcending time and space, creates all that exists in them. It will thus be seen that the apparently simple experience, "I dreamt", is a deep mystery and when properly understood must lead the enquirer to identify himself not with the waking or the dreaming selfs, which are subject to grief but with the metaphysical Reality, the Brahman that underlies both. In fact, when he says "I dreamt", he does so identify himself, though unconsciously. Without the aid of Vedanta

such a superpsychic experience would be altogether unintelligible. The verse in effect says, "Your being able to experience dream and waking shows that you are Brahman or the basic Reality. To know this truth is to have got over all grief".

The verse also refers to a logical truth of deep metaphysical significance, an experience which can be immediately gained by all who will direct their understanding to the particular line. When I remember now a past dream that I had, the two I's are identified by me, heedless of the contradictions involved. Physically, mentally, morally, even socially, no two individuals could perhaps present a more striking contrast. Our behaviour in dreams is often shocking and unaccountable to ourselves. I might now have the greatest contempt or pity for that other individual, or in fact the two characters might justify a wall of otherness being raised between them, except for my feeling of oneness with that dreaming person. In the midst of diversity—and diversity cannot go farther—in mind, in the senses, and in the body, I treat the other shadow as my own shadow. I do it instinctively and consider it no wrenching of judgment to do so. Here in this experience, says Vedanta, if you only let your mind ponder it for five minutes, you reach the deepest depth of your being, the one Reality, the principle of Life, that masquerades as mind and matter, and as the states of consciousness.

The point of identity in "I dreamt" has been reached by unconsciously laying aside all the differentia between the dreaming and waking individuals till only P. C. remained. When by reflection in this manner you arrive at P. C., not as an object nor as the subject, but as the basis lying deeper than both, as responsible for both, you cannot but realise it as your innermost self; and this illumination of your Brahmic nature ought to end at once your ignorance and misery. The experience "I dreamt" is metaphysical and the thought position in it is not in waking or in dream, but in what is beyond both. Only we do not ordinarily realise this. To understand its peculiar nature we require reflection, but the experience itself is obtained by intuition, and the logical process that it involves is thoroughly unconscious. Metaphysics as a science is possible only when the Vedantic method of studying life through the states of consciousness is adopted. The truth so discovered is final as it relates to Reality as a whole. Speculation confined to the waking experience alone is bound to end in various conjectures possessing neither internal nor external harmony and leading to no ultimate conclusions as to immortality, freedom and truth, evil, the destiny of man, God and His scheme of Government, etc.

KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH AND REALITY

Man is a self-conscious being. He knows himself and the world before him. Knowledge is useful to him in two ways. It tends to useful action, and to secure happiness. If one could be happy and contrive to live by inaction he would not act. Life cannot be maintained without active effort, or endured without some taste of happiness. Hence man seeks knowledge and fights out ignorance, not merely for self-sustenance but for pleasure, intellectual or emotional. The rich have no economic troubles and are occupied with endeavours to seize on the sweets of life, either by self-regarding or by self-sacrificing activities. The poor are wholly engrossed in discovering the means of supplying the minimum wants of life, and are happy in proportion to their success in securing them. In either case the animal instincts work in the same manner, but it is the understanding that makes the difference. Knowledge is more powerful than ignorance, and mere physicial strength unattended with knowledge counts for little.

But knowledge is sometimes more disastrous than ignorance, when it is not of the right sort. Man derives his knowledge mainly through perception and inference. Perception depends on the senses and the brain. When these are not in health and vigour, illusions occur, and since one cannot by himself ascertain the conditions of his own perceptive organs, every act of perception is liable to error. It is, however, human nature to believe every immediate cognition to be true, and never to doubt its veracity till a subsequent experience contradicts it; and this is sufficient for practical life. Truth so far as external perception goes may be defined as correspondence between our concept and eternal fact. So long as experience endorses our belief, it is truth. Still such truths cannot be absolute, cannot remain the same for all time and conditions; and science discloses the modifications that accepted truths have to undergo in the light of careful observation and changed conditions. Inference, based as it is on perception, depends for its validity on correct reasoning grounded on experience. Testimony of other minds is usually acceptable; but as it varies with the intelligence, memory and individual competency of men, it cannot vouch for the truth of an idea absolutely or independently. Thus our knowledge of the external world must be progressive, never final.

When we come to the region of the mind, the case is different. Our feelings and volitions are true as we experience them; and

though as time passes they may become dim or liable to be misinterpreted by ourselves, there is no question of their having been really the feelings and volitions that we experienced. They cannot be treated as illusions, for they do not present themselves as symbols of alien objects but are received and entertained on their own account. They are real for the time being, and our knowledge of them is true. The feelings may change but they are never impostors. Even hallucinations and optical illusions represent real feelings and sensations of the individual at the time, though they may not correspond to real objects outside. But the laws of the mind have to be observed and verified, and our knowledge of these must also be progressive in time.

Knowledge obtained in waking life is characterized by Vedanta as empirical. It relates to the sphere of time and change, a sphere in which causation is incessantly active. But waking is only one of the manifestations or expressions of Reality, and cannot furnish us with the means of comprehending the nature of Reality as a whole. The truths are not absolute. Sleep and Dream are two other expressions or aspects, and our knowledge of these is derivable only by private intuition, which, fortunately, is a privilege shared by all and denied to none. Now when a person assumes this point of view from which alone he can survey all the regions of Life, *viz.*, Waking, Dream and Sleep, he has risen to a position in which he is no longer the empirical ego, imprisoned in a body subject to the necessary operation of the laws of time, space and causation, or to the passions and prejudices that rend his inner life. He has transformed himself into a transcendental ego, free from all particular views and prepossessions of the individual. He envisages all life, and all aspects of it. Scenes of birth and death pass before him in succession, and he remains a spectator unaffected by them, being no longer the empirical ego. Theories and speculations of no inconsiderable worth and importance in the empirical stage, political and social laws, marvels of art and science, impress him only as the concomitants of a single aspect of life. He has risen above all the ills of individuation. The whole universe including the heavens above and the earth beneath can have no value and meaning for him, except as glorious exhalations of the Spirit in its waking mood, except as awful evidences of its omnipotence and omniscience. The knowledge to which he thus attains of Life and Reality is absolute and true, as elements of change and error are entirely excluded and overpassed by his situation. He becomes a seer in the truest sense in which all prophets and holy teachers of mankind of every religion are, and

must be. To them Knowledge is identical with Truth and Truth with Reality.*

Reality is undeniable experience, but the undeniability admits of degrees. The perception of the world in the waking state is undeniable, but it is deniable in the other states, while P. C. is undeniable throughout. Hence the latter is the higher Reality. Truth being a correct representation, or cognition of experience, is a concept liable to the same variations as Reality and admits of degrees likewise. Thus truths of waking experience remain such till contradicted by future experience, for they relate to Reality of the second degree which involves change, or changeability in time. The concept of Reality as that which persists in all states as P. C. is the Absolute Truth. Being related to an all-inclusive entity, this concept becomes finally identical with it. For there can be no room for two all-inclusive entities. A concept is a product of consciousness out of its own flesh; but so long as it deals with an external object, it stands, as it were, separate from its source namely consciousness—and is a mode of its reaction to the object. But when Consciousness presents itself for cognition the concept of itself has no alien support in the shape of an object and hence lapses into consciousness, merges in it. For consciousness is not an external entity to which it has to react so as to produce a concept corresponding with it. Similarly the concept of P.C. is P.C., and Truth and Reality coincide in the highest stage. All criteria of Truth—with Perception, Inference, Testimony, feelings and sensations—are valid so long as we wish to determine the truth of our experience in relation to Reality conceived as distinct from us. If they are coherent and uncontradicted they are acceptable. But they bear on their very face the impress of limitation and fallibility. When, however, one realises that Reality includes all, and that he is himself identical with it, he has attained to the highest Truth and in the light of such experience, Truth means Reality and the higher Knowledge. All the three are one at this ultimate stage.

According to Bradley, every idea is true, and the so-called floating ideas which correspond to no objects in the world familiar to us have their counterpart concretes in some other world. To him Reality is inexhaustibly full of an infinite number

* "For knowledge is not a mental act which must be ever preceded by volition, but the automatic result of the immediate presentation of an object to consciousness".—and S. B. I. 1 : 2.

"This differentiates knowledge from the acts of pious meditation or upasana, which deals with pictorial thought.—S. B. I. 1 : 4.

of worlds, and to presume that its manifestation must be restricted to the world we know is unpardonable and unjustfiable in the extreme. But this is a poor defence of a position which in itself is indefensible. Reasoning, to be valid, must be strictly confined to the sphere of positive knowledge. In the words of Johnson, he sets hypothetical possibility against acknowledged certainty; and if his procedure is approved, we shall be landed in absolute chaos. If every idea is true, then why do we discriminate between the ideas of a healthy man and those of a maniac? What need is there to seek for a standard of Truth? His position if accepted would lead to confusion from which escape is impossible. It is in despair of discovering a standard that he seems to have formulated such an extreme view. It would be interesting to study how the Hindu thinkers have grappled with the problem. Whether every notion or idea as such carried with it its own validity, or must wait to be validated by a subsequent one, has been long and furiously disputed. One school took up an attitude similar to that of Bradley. They argued that if a notion, by its own right, cannot be truth, it cannot be made true by virtue of another, for the latter, as notion, partakes of the same imbecility. Besides, practical life affords no time to wait for a second notion to corroborate the first. Meanwhile man must act. Hence a notion justifies itself. It is self-valid. Veracity is its birth-right. On the other side, the logicians pitch their tent in the opposite camp. They deny this innate power claimed for a notion testifying to its own truthfulness. A notion is but a notion. It cannot be more. To claim that it is also true must be by reference to some other part of our experience, and this involves a second notion. Hence a notion is in its own nature indifferent to truth or falsehood. It becomes true in the light of subsequent experience.

But, rejoins the school of self-validity, if the first cognition is indifferent to truth, and if an intermediate cognition of the correspondence between the notion and the object must succeed so that a third cognition established the trustworthiness of the first, how are the second and the third to be trusted any more than the first? For they are also cognitions, and as such do not differ from it. If a cognition is not trustworthy on its own account then even the third cognition has no validity and is liable to sublation; and as human experience is made up of cognitions only, your statement if accepted would lead to universal scepticism and rejection of all truths. "You cannot," retorts the logician, "commend self-validity to our acceptance on this frivolous ground. We are in quest of Truth, and no practical inconvenience can be put forward as a plea for maintaining a false position. In practical life, no one

proceeds logically or philosophically. He assumes the first cognition to be trustworthy and acts on it. He may find that he has acted rightly or wrongly. When he discovers he was mistaken, he still trusts in this cognition of his own error and adjusts his action accordingly. Hence no cognition can guarantee its own reliability, but also no man is deterred by logical considerations from acting on his present cognition. That is human nature, and, scepticism or no scepticism, Life is action, though it also abounds in errors and contradictions. Besides, if every cognition carried with it its own testimony to its veracity, why, there could be no error, no illusion, no ignorance, and no need to remove it by means of science, logic or philosophy."

The contest between the two schools is thus interminable and eternal. Yet they lead to contrary conclusions. A reconciliation is possible only from the Vedantic view. A cognition is true, on its own account, when, in its *nature*, it is not liable to be contradicted. All empirical cognitions are within the bounds of time, and hence liable to change. There is, as the logician urges, no guarantee against error with regard to any single cognition, or even to any series of cognitions. They are all within the sphere of change, and nothing can alter this necessary condition of empirical life, in which probability is the highest form of truth sufficient to render action possible. But, in the higher level, when we transcend the limits of the intellect, and view things from the standpoint of universal intuition, the cognition "I am all", "I am Reality", carries its own validity by annulling all plurality and distinctions; and the logician who waits for a second cognition to validate this, may wait for all time, for the cognition relates to an experience, a realization, from which time and change are eternally banished. A cognition appears self-valid, because it *is* so in this highest instance of it. But it also depends on subsequent cognitions for its trustworthiness, for no empirical cognition can be absolutely true or "sufficient" as Shylock would say.

CHAPTER XII: THEOLOGY AND VEDANTA

PLACE OF THEOLOGY

IN speculating on the nature of life we are landed incontradictions, doubts, difficulties and enigmas, so long as our views are partial, as long as life is restricted to waking experience. Hence European systems of thought, often disclosing as they do subtle intuitions and extraordinary powers of reasoning, have avowedly not arrived at any truth which may be looked upon as final. And by the rarity of the air in which they move they are not calculated to give satisfaction to the plain man who cannot see his way through abstruse concepts above his understanding. What strikes one with wonder is that the western thinker, who acknowledges the poverty of metaphysical results, instead of suspecting as he should the method he has followed to be inadequate to the attainment of any tangible issues, arrives at the amazing and self-stultifying conclusion that no truth can be final and no knowledge absolute. This is as it should be. A partial view distorts truth and discourages hope. Harmony, all-sided harmony, the characteristic of truth, can be found only in a comprehensive view which leaves out no part of life unexplored and it must be such as cannot be affected by any possible change in time or space. It must rest on the firm foundation of facts which by their very nature are unsublatable. Hence, the method of Vedanta, all-inclusive in its character, can alone lead to the discovery of absolute truth that need not stand in fear of the progress of empirical sciences or changes in the waking world.

Theology although intimately allied to metaphysics yet differs from it in its evidences, beliefs and practices. It inculcates trust in God as the moral governor of the Universe, as the friend of Man, and as his saviour. It is satisfied with men's reports for evidence and specious arguments in support of its claims. Its strength is in faith which it advances to a rank higher than what is conceded to reason. It delights in anthropomorphic relations conceived by human fancy between man and God. Although morals are regarded as essential to a religious life yet salvation is made to depend on special grace. Heaven and Hell are spheres

of future life in which abide the virtuous and the wicked respectively. God is a person and must be loved to the exclusion of every other. Christian theology has, in addition, a doctrine of sin, of vicarious satisfaction, and of a divine incarnation for the salvation of all. It, with mahomedanism, has no belief in Karma or rebirth, while for Hinduism and Buddhism these are fundamental. Practices are widely divergent in meditation, prayer, worship, rites and ceremonies.

Prayer is generally offered to a personal God, father of all men; and worship is sometimes in spirit and sometimes in actual deed, where an idol or picture is set up to represent the deity.

In theological matters, therefore, it must be obvious that faith and respect for authority must play a dominant part, and reason admitted only to a second place so far as it can confirm or conform to faith. There are also some special experiences occurring to devout persons to which great value is attached and which are regarded as beyond the plane of rational criticism. Now, since theology assumes a number of truths of the deepest spiritual significance to man but does not trouble itself with furnishing reasons for its tenets, such as the immortality of the soul, the existence of God, the value of truth and virtue—the aid of philosophy must be invoked to explain the theological instinct rooted in the very nature of man and to support rationally every doctrine essential to theology. In the various religions of the world the essential elements must be distinguished from the non-essential, and the former established on the basis of reasoned experience. It must therefore follow that Vedanta, far from being a core of beliefs interesting only to the Hindu, is a science of universal truths which may serve as a criterion by which to discern the gold from the tinsel in every religion. The unwise attack on Vedanta made by unthinking men as though it were inimical to their theological interests is as deplorable as suicidal. It is the science of the soul as arithmetic is the science of numbers. Its truths can have no sectarian application but must concern all beings who have souls. That it was cultivated to perfection by the ancient Hindu sages is a mere accident. Far from evading the claims of its truth, every religion would do well to adjust itself to them—not very difficult to do since every religion has eternal truth at its core, truth seized on by great souls in a moment of illumination. Sooner or later such adjustments will be made substantially if not formally. Every faith would thus become equally perfect, and religious fights would pass away into faint recollections or ugly dreams of a remote past.

THE ESSENTIALS OF THEOLOGY

The necessary dogmas of a religion are: a belief (1) in God with power, wisdom, and goodness, (2) in heaven and hell or a future life involving immortality of the soul, (3) in the authority of inspired writers, (4) in the efficacy of prayer and meditation, (5) in faith as higher than reason, (6) in the significance of religious experience, (7) in original sin, (8) in a saviour, (9) in religious works and renunciation. We shall now take up these points one by one and show how they can acquire rational support only from Vedanta, and how being grounded in the depths of human nature they must require an explanation from any system that professes to deal with truth and reality.

GOD AND THE HUMAN SOUL

No satisfactory proof has hitherto been advanced by any philosopher, of the existence of God or of the soul as an entity different from the mind. The tendency in Europe has latterly been to assume a Divine Being or a highest reality unquestioningly, without however any agreement as to its nature. Some will not concede omnipotence to God who is regarded only as a higher individual soul working for right and good but greatly hampered in his purpose by impassive nature. Others will not invest the highest reality with personality. Vedanta with the help of an intuition common to all men finds it futile to attempt grasping the reality through the waking experience alone, subjects dream and sleep to a deep and careful scrutiny and discovers that, (1) time and space are the threads of the net in which waking and dream worlds are enmeshed, (2) they exercise absolute sway within these worlds, but do not connect waking and dream externally as two distincts, (3) the soul invariably present in each state transcends mind and matter, subject and object, (4) the soul's independent nature is revealed in deep sleep, (5) the soul thus isolated in deep sleep from the changing conditions is the highest Reality of the nature of bliss, and is P. C., (6) the states are manifestations of Reality which is secondless, (7) the world appearing in dream and waking, as well as the individual egos, are but Reality invested with names and forms. These indisputable truths have been established by Vedanta by a course of rigid reasoning applied to experience, and whoever can understand the argumentation will find that he has no option but to accept the conclusions flowing from the premises which are the unquestioned facts of common experience. Thus without transcending human experience Vedanta arrives at an entity, Life as Reality, which transcends the conditions of empirical existence.

The deep instincts that ruled in the breasts of the greatest thinkers are thus in Vedanta fully justified.

The soul is individual only in the waking or dream-state. In its pure nature it is the highest reality, Brahman, as revealed in what is called deep sleep.* Thus, at one stroke, both God and the individual soul are shown to be real entities. There can be individuality without personality as in plants, and immortality without personality as in electrons. In ordinary life no one thinks of his individuality or personality, till a sense of limitation gives rise to the former or of the ego to the latter. In reality, a man is but P.C., and individuality and personality are only contingent phenomena of life. The personality of God follows from the same circumstance that has made the individual soul a person. In deep sleep personality cannot be predicated of reality, but must be assumed to have remained in a germinal or latent condition; and the individuation of the soul in the states of manifestation separated it from God and clothed them both with personality. But God should certainly not be regarded as an object opposed to ourselves as the subject, nor as the finite ego limited in time and space. God as the manifesting principle of waking and dream-worlds is all-wisdom, power and goodness, since these ideas originate in the mind, as which He appears. Vedanta curtails none of these characters but finds them in their absolute unlimited nature in God.† Secondly, the soul being beyond time and space is immortal, but its embodiment being due to desire arising from ignorance, the soul must suffer for its attachment till the dawn of enlightenment. Hence, death is not cessation of life to the soul, but passage into future states of moral discipline for its own spiritual benefit, so that it may ultimately recognise and return to its divine nature.‡ "To Him death is a condiment". Katha 1, 2, 25. Here it may be perceived that the immortality of the soul is inevitable and the doctrine of future life is, though an inference, a necessary inference from the immortality of the soul, the imperfection of present life, and the divinity of the soul whose craving for the highest happiness must be fulfilled, as it is being daily fulfilled in P. C. or deep sleep. Although this felicity is our eternal possession, yet ignorance conceives it as a

* "The individual Soul is Brahman."—S. B. I. 4 : 6. and "coming from the Real the individual souls are not aware of the fact.—S. B. III. 2 : 8.

† For, division or determination can alone imply limitation.—S. B. II. 3 : 7.

‡ "There is no death, what seems so is transition—Longfellow.

fruit to be attained after a period of probation which spread over time appears as the *Samsara*—birth and death. Hence, virtue may hope to be taken into heaven and vice must expect to be relegated to hell.

SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES

Every religion attaches the highest value to the statements made in its holy books whose authors are assumed to be inspired. This is easily accounted for. While certain truths are instinctively acknowledged by the human mind—every soul being Brahman—no effort of reason can establish them, that is, reason applied to waking experience alone. But great souls, holy seers, have beheld these truths which are necessary to satisfy our deepest cravings and hence their assertions and injunctions are accepted without question. This is the origin of the religious duties ordained on man, so peculiar to every sect or community. Great truths however are mixed up with many more or less untenable dogmas representing national or individual prejudices, and superstition thus gathers round a truth-core and gradually crystallises into custom.

All eschatological doctrines take their stand on the immortality of the soul, the perfection of the moral law and a supervising Providence—truths which only Vedanta can place beyond doubt or dispute.

RELIGIOUS LIFE AND EXPERIENCE

When once the metaphysical truth is acknowledged, these are seen to possess the highest spiritual significance. The identity of the individual soul with the highest reality implies the identity of their interests. God cannot intend anything else than the good of the human soul. Although situations may arise in life which seem to involve the individual in hopeless ruin, yet spiritual forces are undoubtedly operating in ways unintelligible to us perhaps, but not therefore deniable; and their effect must be absolutely beneficial to the suffering soul. But we desire that what appears to us as present evil must be instantly removed or that an imaginary good should be secured. Whether we pray to God or not it is certain that the divine scheme of things must be productive of both universal and individual good, since divine purpose, *viz.*, self-expression for self-realisation, cannot be stultified and since salvation is the birthright of the individual soul. Still the lines of approach to the goal might be infinite and yet every one of them

equally adapted to the end in view, like the infinite radii that converge towards the centre. A pious unselfish heart, a holy life, must be nearer to salvation than the reverse, and favour the operation of the divine principle better. Miracles of faith might happen though not infringing Nature's laws, for God's power is unlimited, and his love and sympathy for struggling humanity are unquestionable. If then every event in life is ordained but for the good of the individual, it will not be unreasonable to further suppose that the means to the particular end might possibly be diverse and that in his omnipotence God might in response to prayers permit a change better satisfying the emotions of the devotee, though, on the whole, God's plan would remain unaffected. Herein lies the efficacy of prayer. If God were not a person, a heavenly father, nay, our very self, to pray to Him would be the act of a maniac, since nothing is more certain than the inexorableness of the causal law. From the divine point of view this law can be fulfilled in a myriad equally possible ways, though after an event has occurred it does appear to us to have occurred in the only possible manner. This is an illusion due to our intellect. Causality overpowers it. But surely omnipotence is free and to prescribe bounds to it is absurd. God will not indeed work miracles to oblige an individual, but to generate wished-for results in the most natural manner is the greater miracle.

The almost universal faith in the efficacy of prayer points to our ineradicable belief, that every apparent evil in life must be finally overcome. Even though we perceive that in numerous instances prayers have been ineffective, yet this does not destroy our faith or expose its unwisdom. But even more we believe in divine intervention all the same. How is this to be explained? Is it due to selfish hope which is incurable? If so, how is *that* explained? Thus, obviously, our religious acts imply that we expect God to be ever friendly to us, that he can grant our petition and that every disappointment proceeds from His inscrutable will. But to refer to His will the tragic close of a sweet musical life—such as that of a Cordelia or a Desdemona—is piety run mad. Nevertheless our faith in God's moral government is immutable, deep. This instinct must not be ignored, but be either justified or explained. Vedanta steps in here most opportunely with its theory of *Karma*. Birth and death are imposed on the individual soul, not once but endlessly till the soul turns its steps towards a return home. Life is not a mere casual emergence of a transitory principle that appears at birth and vanishes at death. It

is more than birth and death. It overflows both and presses both into its service. It is reality. Hence it is not like a short thread snapped at death but is a magnificent fabric as broad as the heavens, with time and space for its warp and woof.

Closely connected with prayer is meditation. The latter demands detachment of the mind from all temporal interests and fixing it on God. This means lifting ourselves above the lower self, abnegating it and merging our individuality in His Presence. The real experience steers clear of all controversies concerned with monism and dualism, unity and multiplicity. As meditation develops, individuality is forgotten, and a state of ecstasy reached which baffles description. Now this is possible only if our higher nature is ever an immediacy, a fact accomplished, and ever remains as a waveless ocean of blue crystal waters at the core of our being, accessible at all times to selfless love and devotion. Vedanta lays down a doctrine whose truth is realised in life. The pleasure we all enjoy in communion with God, in self-communion, will be an eternal mystery to those who do not seek its explanation in the light of Vedanta, whose first principle is that the self is all and that the self is sweet,—not of course the lower empirical self, but the higher which bears not the faintest taint of individuality. Prayer is said to be most efficacious when combined with meditation, for the latter ushers the supplicant straight into the presence of the most High, before whom the soul sets out its woes and implores relief.*

The greatest service rendered by Vedanta to the world is its discovery of the syllable "Aum" as a symbol of Reality. Throughout the sacred literature of the Hindus the occurrence of "Aum" is deeply significant. As a mere sound or as a mere symbol it may not possess an intrinsic value, but interpreted in the light of the Upanishads it enables the human soul to rise to the transcendent level.† A stands for all waking experience, U for dream-experience and M for deep sleep or P.C. The attitude of mind which one has to take up to envisage these three independent expressions of life directly leads him to the realisation of himself as P.C.; for dream and waking thus set over against each other neutralise each other as being contradictory, while the persistent ego remains unscathed to identify itself with P.C., signified by M. Thus the whole syllable "AUM" when either uttered or meditated

* "Thou art I, Lord, and I am Thou, Lord." S.B. III. 3 : 37.

† "That word, which all the Vedas glorify, which all penances declare, in pursuit of which men lead lives of continence and renunciation, I shall briefly tell you—it is Aum."—Katha Up. I. 2-15.

upon with a clear grasp of its peculiar import leads to self-realisation. Distraction during the period is impossible.*

As prayer and meditation are inward acts, worship is an extenal, paying reverent homage to God. It implies a deep feeling of meek trust which must embody itself in actual expression. Reverence is grounded in consciousness of worth, and hence worship consists essentially in the praise of God and in acts of obeisance to Him.† In practice, different religions prescribe different forms of worship. In some, symbols are used to aid the wandering mind to concentrate its attention on the object of worship. Among Roman Catholics and Hindus, symbolism has been reduced to a system. The latter have a very elaborate one with imposing ceremonies which, in public worship conducted in temples or Mutts, are very impressive. To the Vedantin in whose opinion the intellect and the imagination must be contented with only symbols of Reality—which as manifestations are that Reality—idolatry is neither necessary nor contemptible. The ignorant hatred of idols and of idolatry as sinful is slowly passing away and many thinkers are coming to realise that those that criticise the practice cannot themselves help forming some mental image of God, when they truly meditate on Him or offer Him worship.‡ A mental construction is in no measure holier in principle than a figure wrought in metal, wood or stone. As Carlyle says, "Idolatry becomes abominable only when it is divorced from sincerity. Sincere faith in any form is holy."

Meditation, prayer and worship are peculiar activities which can proceed only from a self-conscious being like man. No theory explaining life as a physical, organic or biological process can account for this deep-rooted instinct. Man is neither a machine nor a mere plant or animal. He is far more. He is an individuation of God, and his religious faith bearing His impress is more deeply ingrained in his nature than any other instinct. One could not be even a sceptic or a nihilist if one by nature were not so constituted as to be able to conceive intellectually what the pious man means by God. Doubts and denials have arisen, not from the absence of the religious instinct in men, but from the absence of such methods of establishing the spiritual truth as Vedanta employs and reason demands.

* "All is Aum; what transcends time is also Aum; this self is Aum or Brahman."—Mandukya Up. I. 1.

† Gita, XVIII. 46.

‡ "The distinctions in Brahman are for the purpose of meditation and worship".—S. B. III. 21.2.

Some of the greatest men, who cannot disown the religious sentiment working in their heart, who yet are not satisfied with the proofs of divine existence that the human intellect can provide, have felt it necessary to discard reason altogether in matters that concern the spiritual interests of man and to instal faith on a higher throne than what reason can claim. Though this is a natural procedure on the part of those who cannot repress their genuine instincts, yet it is both culpably inconsistent and unfair that while in every other affair of life, they cannot forego the guidance of reason, yet in this matter alone affecting their deepest well-being they can thrust its claims aside and transfer their loyalty to faith which in temporal concerns is found to be not only unreliable but sometimes positively dangerous. Still, what can they do? On the one hand, the limitation of human understanding precludes all possibility of a positive knowledge of Reality, yet on the other, there is a feeling imbedded deep in our very nature that there is a God for all that. To be true and honest to ourselves, to be self-loyal, we cast off in this respect our allegiance to reason and follow in the wake of faith. Vedanta quite justifies this preference. It points out that faith in God is not opposed to reason. It is the voice of reason, but not of reason unaided. Intuition, the soil in which reason itself grows and thrives, intuition opaque and unpromising to common minds—this intuition bearing upon one part of our real experience and interpreted by reason—reveals the basis of faith to be solid, and confirms rather than weakens the universal authority and competency of reason in all matters empirical or transcendental. Faith is thus but an ambassador of reason. What faith declares, reason ratifies.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

If man were only a part of external nature he could not have an experience. The term is meaningless unless used in reference to a conscious being. No stock or stone can have experience; for, it implies a store of impressions and not merely a present feeling or perception. Even in scientific language, when an inanimate object is declared to be subject to change or influence from other bodies the term really derives its significance from an anthropomorphic attribution to the lifeless body of changes or reactions which have a meaning only when predicated to a conscious being. It is an unconscious transference to sentient objects, the power and the privilege of life. Therefore experience in the strictest sense is possible only to living beings. A memory is an outspread consciousness that puts the past in juxtaposition with

the present and enables comparisons, contrasts and conclusions. Recollection is a greater marvel than creation or cognition, and none of these is intelligible except as the mysterious manifestations of intelligence. More than all, what is sleep, what is a dream? Except as experiences of a metaphysical nature, our mind can form no conception of them. To this class belong religious experiences. In acts of common worship, in religious ceremonies, in private prayers in listening to impassioned talks or addresses or appeals of a religious kind, one is overcome with feeling and melts into tears, yet there is no sense of sorrow or affliction. The wisest or the most ignorant might be moved. The feeling is one of disconsolateness, a consciousness of vague exile from a dear presence, of overpowering mercy shown to the undeserving self, of some great loss ineffable. When the mind's oscillations from idea to idea are stilled and it is fixed on the object of devotion, feelings become undefinable and tears roll down like summer showers. Sense of otherness, of multiplicity, of time or space, of the ego or the non-ego, is simply abolished. It is neither waking nor sleep. Individuality merges into the Absolute and the devotee at that moment rises above all distinctions and doubts, above all temporal concerns and behaves in a manner strange to the rest of the world. Not unoften such persons acquire the powers of a spiritual nature, such as divination, thought-reading, curing diseases, granting boons and performing feats of strength and memory, etc. It is a pity that spurious claims to these powers have caused the genuine ones to be called in question, but surely real holiness has ever been held in fear and reverence, and this could not be, unless there were some significance attached to a holy man's blessing or curse. Vedanta's teaching that all is spirit, that the soul is divine, that the manifestations half conceal and half reveal it—it is this alone that makes the peculiar experiences of religious mystics possible and intelligible. No materialism or naturalism, no dualism or pluralism can account for them.

VEDANTA AND OTHER RELIGIONS

Of the great teachers of mankind, it is remarkable that Buddha insisted on control of desire and renunciation, Sankara on life based on a true philosophic conception, Jesus on belief on him and in his power to save, Mahomed on the equality of all souls before God. Buddha and Sankara, though born in a land of idolatry, little troubled about temples, but addressed individuals and assemblies, laying stress on individual effort. Jesus looked on the temple in

Jerusalem as the house of his Father. Mahomed sanctified Mecca. Buddha and Sankara, again, taught that every soul including their own was of the same nature and had the same destiny, which it could realise by the same method. Jesus claimed to be the son of God, sometimes the son of Man and promised salvation only to those that believed in Him. Mahomed, on the other hand, professed only to reveal the commandments of God and claimed no higher honours for himself than those due to a prophet. Buddha and Sankara referred to no heaven or hell, or to a God that led the human souls through death to either of those places according to their deserts, but emphasised extinction of desire, subdual of will, and conquest of ignorance. In the teachings of Jesus and Mahomed, God is painted in anthropomorphic colours and His personality is sweet or terrible according to individual merits. To Buddha and Sankara *Karma* and re-birth are truths beyond dispute, while Jesus and Mahomed do not allude to them at all. Buddhists and Hindus never launched into religious persecutions, whereas the history of Christianity and Mahomedanism is a series of acts of deliberate bloodshed, territorial conquest and acquisition of temporal power, from zeal and fanaticism. The systems of Buddha and Sankara are philosophical, profoundly moral and intellectual, whereas Jesus and Mahomed gave to the world simple theologies appealing more to the emotions of the common people than to the understanding of the enlightened. For a scientific analysis of human nature, of life as made up of *avasthas*, you look in vain in the teachings of Jesus and Mahomed. It is prominent in Buddha and is perfected in Sankara. The Upanishads alone of all the holy books of the world contain the doctrine that gives the ultimate solution of the enigma of life and existence.

ORIGINAL SIN AND SALVATION

Every religion starts with the idea of man being born in sin. Vedanta traces sin to primeval ignorance, a fall from a state of purity and perfection. Christianity, Mahomedanism and Judaism have stories relating how the fall occurred. Now this belief is common, as everyone is conscious of his own moral imperfection. Vedanta propounds a profound theory to explain it, the theory of beginningless Nescience, which is responsible for all the ills and sufferings of man. Christianity refers to inherited sin, inherited from Adam. But surely sin cannot be inherited. There can be no sin where there is no power of conscious choice, and as there can be no aristocracy or monarchy of souls,

one man, be he Adam or any other, cannot vicariously determine the fates of all the rest. No soul that is born can have sinned in advance. But the theory of original sin represents an instinctive perception of our present condition being by no means what it might have been. We have desires, aims, ideals, transcending our practical life. We know we are not happy, and that implies that we can know real happiness. Hence, we have fallen from a better state, "through sin," says Christianity, "through ignorance," says Vedanta. The sin theory is obviously untenable for sin being itself an evil is not the root-cause of evil. We can now appreciate the *Maya* theory. Ignorance in the sense that we do not discriminate between body and soul, between physical and spiritual entities, must be admitted by all as the very condition of our temporal life. We identify ourselves with our body and senses, and thereby carry on the concerns of life. Our power to cognise, judge, will and feel presupposes such an identification. The joys and sorrows of life are engendered by it. Sin emanates from the ego's assertion of its will. How can we doubt then that evil and sin spring from ignorance which is the ultimate cause? That ignorance cannot be referred to a further source beyond does not invalidate the *Maya* theory which is warranted by facts of real experience.

SAVIOURS

The doctrine of original sin demands for its correlative that of a saviour. This in Christianity is an incarnation of God Himself, in Mahomedanism, a prophet. To believe in their power to save is to secure salvation. Vedanta emphatically denies the possibility of release from bonds of ignorance except through knowledge, and the knowledge must be imparted by a teacher that knows the Self, the Reality, as identical with himself. God Himself must be the preceptor. In manifesting Himself as the world, God would seem to have taken care to provide the means of realising His own nature in the human individual. The scriptures and the preceptor are the means. The instinct of incarnation is deep-rooted in us. It is a dim consciousness of a metaphysical fact, *viz.*, Brahman manifesting Himself in the shape of the world and of the great teacher.* The idea of a prophet is also due to our belief in God's interest in the human soul and in its salvation. The theory, however, requires that the scriptures and the teacher, to be the divine instruments of reclaiming human nature, ought to be such as to satisfy ethical and metaphysical

* Gita, IV; 7 and 8,

ideals resting upon oneness of Reality and the identity of the human soul with the divine. Hence we have Christian mysticism, Mahomedan sufism, and the monism of the Upanishads. The basal question is, how can one save another? What interest can one have in the salvation of another? To explain this, Christianity conceives the fatherhood of God. But even fatherhood works only in so far as the interests of the father and the son are identical. "I and my father are one." Self-hood, however, makes the identity absolute. God never wearies of effecting the emancipation of the soul, says Vedanta, through all its migrations, because His love to it is that of self to self, not of self to a non-self.* Here we reach the limits of relationship—absolute identity. That the saviour should have suffered like us and died for us, is not a necessary circumstance. Suffering and death are the trappings of sin. A sinless being cannot die. They cannot be essentials in a sinless saviour. Purity of life, universality of love and sublimity of the truth revealed, these must be the characteristic marks. The rest are accidents of birth and situation. The Judaical story of Adam's fall is only a simplification for common minds of the profound metaphysical doctrine of the self-expression of Brahman. The Upanishads in their unapproachable simplicity declare: "He desired to become many and He became all this, living and lifeless."

RELIGIOUS WORKS AND RENUNCIATION

Every religion agrees with the rest in holding that not affirmation of the will but denial alone can lead to release from pain and ignorance. Modern thinkers ridicule the idea of renouncing the joys of life for the sake of expectations in the unknown world beyond death. They seem to say with Omar Khayam,

> Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
> Before we too into the dust descend;
> Dust into Dust and under dust to lie
> Sans wine, sans song, sans singer and sans end!

Life on any terms is a feast of delights, and not to appreciate them is the height of folly. But a life of abnegation of self, of abstention from pleasure is really sweeter than life spent in excesses. Renunciation is not so bitter as is commonly imagined. "My path is easy and my yoke is light," says Jesus. Real love and sympathy unconfined to particular individuals or causes are possible only to natures that have risen above pandering to selfish craving. Vedanta well asks "how can

* Gita, IV: 11.

he grieve or be silly who sees oneness everywhere?" The view of those that are for making the most of the world is wofully short-sighted. It proceeds from unwisdom. It can indeed be traced to the deeper instinct of seeking joy everywhere on the part of man, because he is of the nature of joy, but it mistakes transitory enjoyments for eternal happiness which is the real quest of the soul. The religious man could rise above these trivialities, and by disinterested activities find sweeter joy in this life, even if all the promises of a future life were proved to be a naked lie. Vedanta guarantees the hopes of the pious. It lays bare the immortal core of man's being which cannot rest for ever satisfied with joys, however rapturous, springing from external sources, but makes him seek that ecstatic reunion with itself, before the bliss of which all the delights of earthly life with their inevitable penalties are as veritable dust and ashes. A holy life of abstention is not blind to the beauties of the world, but is endowed with a divine vision that lends grace to beauty and converts into beauty ugliness itself. As hunger is its own sauce, the soul hungering after union with God finds the universe illumined with a life divine, and even while wide awake enjoys the ecstacies of a mystic trance. He is truly intoxicated with God who sees nothing else anywhere. Vedanta by disclosing the divinity of the human soul sets the seal of its approval on a life of self-denial and on acts of self-sacrifice. For to renounce joys is the greater joy. The rule is in this case reversed. He gains who loses and who loses gains. No other system can account for this holy instinct of renunciation. The Gita commends the asceticism of spirit while condemning at the same time the evasion of works.

KARMA AND REBIRTH

In addition to the above dogmas common to all religions, Vedanta imposes two which for their philosophical value might have been accorded more general acceptance. These are those of *Karma* and *Rebirth*. If they contribute to interpret life to a greater extent than otherwise, no mere prejudice should stand in the way of their being included among the essentials of a religious creed. These two go together, being logical corollaries flowing from the doctrine of immortality. They function in three ways. First, they explain the apparent injustice and inequality in life. A good man is subjected to endless suffering, a ruffian spends his time in endless jollities and a series of unlooked for and unmerited successes. Innocence is entrapped and vice exults. In the face of such undeniable facts it is too much to expect poor mortals to

retain unwavering faith in an inscrutable higher will or an overshadowing divinity that seems to be eternally unconscious of its duty towards its own children of virtue, rather that seems positively to derive pleasure from advancing vice to positions of irresistible power. A child is born blind or lame, or with distorted limbs. A greedy individual or race overpowers another, trampling under foot every consideration of fairness or humanity. How is all this to be reconciled with our notion of a moral, beneficent Being who rules the universe? The doctrine of *Karma* explains the incongruities of life by referring the incidents in the present life of an individual to his acts in a past life. Now, if the soul is immortal it could not have had any birth. To conceive the origination or the destruction of a soul is as impossible as to conceive the genesis or the disappearance of consciousness. In the next place, we find in our experience that every deed leads to an inevitable result. In a strictly moral world no soul should suffer except as it deserves by its acts. How is it illogical then to account for a particular lot in this life by an act in a previous one? One that really believes in an imperishable soul cannot regard birth and death as anything more than walls that enclose a particular space separating it from other spaces and not as confining all life within them, any more than walls can confine all space within themselves. The truth is that space pervades the walls themselves, and similarly the soul persists through birth and death. In the third place, the doctrine of *Karma* is a moral whip which cannot be and should not be averted by prayer or artifice. The inflexible rigour with which *Karma* visits the soul with pains and penalties is a clear though grim vindication of God's care for the purification and development of every individual spirit, and is evidence of the ever vigilant moral law that never slumbers for a moment. Every little act in our lives, every thought or idea, begets its consequence necessarily. God excuses nothing, ignores nothing, but out of the past creates the inexorable future which shall take the soul onward in its course of pilgrimage, either by earning fresh merit or by dropping off evil tendencies by self-sacrifice or suffering.* "The biter bit" illustrates *Karma*.

The law of *Karma* being uncompromising and inflexible in its nature has been supposed to encourage fatalism. Whatever happens in the present life is the necessary result of past *Karma*. How then can one improve his lot by turning over a new leaf? What can he do but sit with folded hands passively submitting in despair to the buffettings of *Karma*? Now this way

* Gita. XVIII. 61.

of regarding the law is certainly unwarranted. The law is just as universal as any other. The rain can drench me, but I put up the umbrella to prevent it. I avoid the scorching sun by going into a shade. Both the evil and its avoidance are quite compatible with each other. If I start life under definite conditions already determined what can prevent me from acting in a way to improve them? The effects of previous action can as such be countered by present action. We are perfectly free to act. Our consciousness of a will that leads to acts that we recognise as our own, proves that to refer even deliberate acts to necessity or past *Karma* is improper, unjustifiable and perilous. Past *Karma* is responsible only for the present situation in which a man finds himself. But life does not deny opportunity for amendment, for fresh initiatives or for changed outlook. If one is, however, sincere in his absolute faith in necessity, he must not complain of any evil or discomfort in life, for to him all the events occur as a matter of ordered necessity. No, whenever a man's feelings are roused, he never leans on this paralysing plea, but he directly shakes off his passivity and rushes into acts apparently called for by the occasion. A germ in a sense has its future predetermined, yet its development does also depend on a hundred circumstances, the environments, etc.

Although *Karma* cannot exculpate a man who is indifferent to duty it still serves as a soothing balm to the soul when a sad bereavement or calamity has already taken place. A promising child is dead. The bread-winner of the family is drowned. A young man, the darling of his parents, falls fighting for his country. Such tragic incidents abound in life. It is in vain to offer the will of God as the only explanation. It certainly cannot console except by representing God as a heartless tyrant. Why should God take away these precious souls? Is it a kindness or a graciousness to them? Victor Hugo bemoaning the loss of his child exclaims,

> O God! hast thou truly believed
> That under the skies, I shall prefer,
> The awful rays of thy glory
> To the tender light of her eyes?
>
> —Translation by Mr. H. V. N.

The doctrine of *Karma* without arraigning Providence forces the soul into acquiescence in a law which acts impartially and universally under the guidance of a beneficent Being for the highest good of the soul which is identical with itself. Ignorance of the law has put the brightest Christian intellect in a frantic puzzle which tears the tender heart asunder, as in the case of Victor Hugo.

Again, it is a most powerful moral good which God employs to compel free spirits to keep to the road of righteousness. Such compulsion is not opposed to real moral freedom. When Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, God relentlessly expelled him from paradise and stationed an angel with a flaming sword turning its edge in all directions to prevent Adam from eating of the fruit of Life. A physical body that has fallen from a lofty position may be lifted up and replaced. A spiritual being can sustain only a moral fall due to uncontrolled will and to ignorance. He cannot be reinstated simply by a physical feat. He must climb up again through all the steps that measured his fall, through pain, repentance, self-denial and wisdom. He must subdue his lower nature by acts of love and self-sacrifice, and realise his higher self by meditation, worship and knowledge.

On the contrary, the doctrine has been found to be an incentive to the highest works of charity and benevolence among the Hindus and Buddhists. The most magnificent temples, free feeding institutions, profuse gifts of land and money, richest endowments in support of religious education, hermitages and religious orders existing to this day, all eloquently testify to the beneficial influence it has had upon human motives. Illiterate and plain men, women and children can understand the doctrine, and the poorest beggars in India reconcile themselves to their lot by ascribing it to their past *Karma*. The truth is so simple and so immediately verified in every day experience, *viz.*, that a result is traceable to a certain act, that it carries conviction to the dullest men. The body will one day drop down but merit obtained by charity will accompany the soul and fructify in all its migrations. Those that for want of such a doctrine refer tragic occurrences to an inscrutable providence only get comfort by trying to stifle the irrepressible sense of injustice.

Far from the doctrine leading to inactivity born of despair, the nations that believe it regard it as a truth which places within their reach the means of moulding their lives in their present and of controlling their destiny in their future birth. Severe fasts are cheerfully endured, pilgrimages undertaken, religious gifts made and austerities practised, at considerable self-sacrifice and hardship, to neutralise the evil *Karma* and secure merit for the future. It may be said that the Christian, the Mahomedan and the Jew who have no faith in *Karma* are also well known for their charity and acts of selfless daring. But my object in referring to the influence of the doctrine on human life and conduct is to show that it is uniformly beneficial and not baneful. While the intellec-

tual difficulty of the problem of evil is really faced by it, while in the other religions it is evaded.

The doctrine brings not only contentment and peace to the heart, but is a safeguard against social and political cataclysms resulting from the monopoly by particular communities of wealth and power. It has both an individual and a communal aspect. The individual *Karma* bears on the lot of each man by himself, while the family or the community is subject to the combined effect of the *Karma* of all its members. Hence Gita is right in saying, " Athava srimatam gehe yoga bhrashtopi jayate," *i. e.*, he who dies before attaining the results of his *yogic* practice will have the good fortune of being born in the family of the great by wealth or intellect. Hindu traditions are replete with instances of men and women who strove with eminent success to triumph over their evil *Karma*. Visvamitra thus attained to Brahmanhood, Savitri reclaimed the life of her consort from the clutches of Death. Harischandra bore the tragic ills brought on by unpropitious fate but to the last clung to truth and virtue. Boy Markandeya conquered Death through firm faith in Lord Siva which not even the dread presence of Yama could deflect for a moment. Moreover, when a man suffers from a series of troubles and tribulations it makes him reflect on the means of overcoming them in this life and avoiding them in the next. The fundamental doctrine of *Karma* is "If you indulge in desire, acquire merit by which to realise it, for without the support of good acts behind you none of your aspirations will come to fruition."

"Punyair vina nahi bhavanti samihitarthah". Those to whom the doctrine is unknown are deeply perplexed by occurrences in life which seem to be, in all candour, a libel on the righteousness of God. If the present is the only chance of life given to the soul and here it is handicapped in a hundred ways, materially, physically, and socially, where is the equity of God or His concern for the happiness of man or for the maintenance of the moral order? While the physical law is absolutely perfect the moral law is seen to limp. The only solution to this reasonable doubt is supplied by the doctrine of *Rebirth*. The moral law is equally perfect but its operation is not to be judged from the experiences of a single life. God is not unjust.* He has given infinite chances for the soul to redeem itself from errors, for life is not confined to one birth but extended through a series.

None of the doctrines of Vedanta has become so popular as

* Gita IX: 29.

this. Buddhism entirely proceeds upon an assumption of it. Whatever else it may deny—and it denies the world and the soul as real permanent entities—it does not deny *Karma* and *Rebirth*. These keep the wheel of *samsara* in eternal motion. The will leads to action and enjoyment which impose future births. To stop the motion of the wheel you must conquer the will which supplies the motive power. You must cease to crave for enjoyment and therefore to act, and therefore to will or desire. At any rate Lord Buddha attributes *Rebirth* to *Karma* and accounts for inequalities in life by reference to it.

CHAPTER XIII: MAYA

HEGEL'S DOCTRINE

WHEN Hegel declared that being and non-being were identical the common-sense world was amazed at the audacity, and naturally suspected there was something wrong with the man and his doctrine, though the latter was dressed up in the subtlety of logic and presented in the name of reason. He attempted the miraculous task of deducing the whole of the sensible world from Being, as implicit in it ; and he began by extracting Nothing from Being. Combining these opposites he arrived at Becoming. But while this concept of Becoming cannot explain the active processes of real life and is a still-born child we detect in the light of Vedanta a fundamental falsity in the identification of Being with Nothing. Let us take a tree, for example. Hegel says that whatever different ideas we may have of a tree we must all agree in taking it as a being, but a pure being is such only because it is divested of all its determinations and hence it is identical with nothing which has none. Now this would be true if ordinarily anyone thought of the pure being of the tree apart from its determinations. What is our common experience? By a tree we understand a certain combination of determinations. We should be, for instance, surprised if it had no height, colour, branches, leaves, roots, etc., and every one of these, its members, again is taken as a bundle of determinations. It is the simultaneous appearance of these sensible qualities or determinations as a combined whole that invests the object with existence. We say there is a tree out there. The isness of the tree presupposes the isness of everyone of its determinations, and when we think away the latter completely and without a residue the tree itself vanishes into a mere nothing. It is not correct to say that then pure being is left, or to identify this phantasm with nothing. Yet, this is just what Hegel asserts and has done, and on this untrue foundation he has raised the superstructure of his extraordinary system. The fact is that the realistic instinct imbedded in man operates in Hegel as in others ; and he seems to have imagined a shadowy substratum behind the determinations of the tree ; and what is more easy than to knock

down the determinations that hide the substratum and seize on the latter as the pure being? To come upon pure being, therefore, Hegel had to do violence to his doctrine of absolute idealism and be obliged to realism for the start he makes.

Vedanta does not admit the possibility of conceiving absolute nothing, for this conception demands a consciousness first; and ruling out absolute nothing Vedanta points to pure being not as got at by depriving a tree of its determinations but as experienced as pure consciousness in the very depths of our nature, *viz.*, sleep. Pure being cannot be an object any more than absolute nothing. We intuite our nature as pure being, but this pure being of Vedanta is entirely distinct from Hegel's notion of it. In the first place it is not an object which is imperceptible for want of attributes. Secondly, Vedantic being is pure only in the sense that it is not clothed with universals and that it cannot be described in terms of the understanding. Thirdly, it is neither subject nor object but is the source of both, the indefinable eternal Reality into which subject and object resolve themselves in sleep. Moreover, its nature is one of supreme felicity and of the essence of consciousness, the riches of which is not to be depicted in the limping terms of empirical life.

A pure being is an impossible concept. We cannot conceive that which has no attributes, but clothed with attributes it becomes an existent thing. And attributes cannot inhere in a thing with or without attributes. A tree is neither being nor non-being nor a combination of both. Even the purity in pure being is an attribute while negation is determination. Pure being must be the basis on which attributes must be imposed. But when all attributes are removed the tree disappears. Where is pure being left from which non-being can be extracted? If pure being is non-being how is the one extracted from the other? Our conception of a tree itself involves contradictions. A concept, besides, is a definition and a definition is qualification; hence, we cannot have the concept of an unqualified pure being.

The idea of non-being can arise only in a world of plurality in which the being of anything entails the non-being of every other. Hegel's Being and non-Being are both equally empirical. Such notions require for their substrate P. C., a Being whose counterpart non-being is impossible. The notions of Being and non-Being are based upon an objective view of things. But P.C. refuses to be so viewed. The Hegelian satisfaction that the riddle of life has been read by tracing life to a self-consciousness which contains a subject and an object in its womb, and that the

highest truth is identity in difference is rather premature. We know that the world contains unity and plurality. But how can multiplicity be deduced from an absolute one if as Hegel says the one is already infected with a germinal multiplicity? It is no longer a real one and all pretensions to having solved the riddle are invalid. A development whether organic or logical requires the potential existence of all the later products or categories as the tree in the seed, in the first stage. If no stage is the first, but Being contains the Absolute Idea and the latter the former, there is no real development. The whole deduction so-called is a myth, and development an illusion, for at both ends the terms are complete and mutually inclusive. The impetus to evolve is a fancy. If, besides, it is all a logical or organic necessity no room is left for moral freedom or choice, and the story of such an evolution is void of all intelligible interest. The seed contains the tree and the latter the former and the life of both is changed from one condition to the other without rest or cessation. Explained so, the world has little room for morals, religion, art or science. The seed indeed shoots up into a tree and the tree gives forth the seed. But what is the inner principle that accounts for the growth and the transformation? Why should not the seed remain for ever as such? To assert that the one *must* become the other does not remove their radical mystery, and the explanation is inadequate. Gentile improves upon Hegel by asserting that reality is a process of thinking, but what becomes of this act in deep sleep? If we are thinking uninterruptedly even then, we convert it into a waking state. In explaining Becoming with the help of non-being, Hegel anticipatively makes use of categories already evolved. It is a self-delusion. Besides, sleep proves that self-consciousness, such as is relied on by Hegel, is not possible except in empirical states.

Another obvious fallacy is that, while showing pure being to be identical with nothing, Hegel says it passes over into becoming. Pure being and nothing are opposites, and becoming is the identity of opposites. One might ask, how are being and nothing opposed to each other. They can be opposed only by their determinations, but as both are equally devoid of the latter, it is mocking to be told that they are opposed. That is to say, to deduce becoming from being you require the combination of opposites, hence being and nothing are such. Again they must be shown to be identical. Hence they are declared to be such, because they are not distinguishable by determinations. If now pure being and nothing are undeterminable they can be

neither identical nor opposed. For these concepts presuppose determinations and apply only to things clothed with attributes. Thus the initial failure to deduce successfully Becoming from Being causes the whole system to collapse.

THE THEORY OF MAYA

Far from the novelty, the originality and the unpredictability of Nature's changes being fully explicable by unaided reason, the phenomena of life can be looked upon only as a spontaneous expression of an Almighty Power for self-realisation. Human reason has unbounded scope, no doubt, within the empirical sphere, which it cannot transcend without the supplemental aid of the deepest intuitions of life. Vedanta calls all manifestations by a beautiful term—*Maya*, the expressiveness of which can be compared only with that of the other term, *Atman.*

While the absolute Reality is the opposite of absolute unreality, the phenomenal world is the manifestation of the former limited by time and space and is essentially identical with Reality. The world, therefore, in a sense, that is, judging from its appearance, is unreal. But as this appearance is not independent of the essence it is also reality. It cannot be defined in specific terms and is the effect of a power which Reality possesses. Both the power and its effect are denoted by the term *Maya*. Reality or God has the power without undergoing any modification, of taking an existential form, *viz.*, the World, that is, as nature governed by laws which the scientist is able to discover only because he as consciousness is identical with the power which in this form (appearance) he observes and studies. *Maya* is thus inscrutable, for it presents to the human mind Reality broken up into subject and object. This division, splitting up, is unreal; but as the mind works only as an organ of differentiation, it cannot disclose truth which is ever one and undivided, and all its pronouncements are either self-contradictory or unintelligible. This profound doctrine of *Maya* is most remarkably exemplified in all our experiences, the most common as well as the most recondite. The vagueness and the indefiniteness of all our primary notions is well known. What are movement, change, space, matter, substance, quality, mind, perception, space, time, causation, life, death, God, Heaven, Hell? Is there any agreement, or possibility of any such, between any two minds with regard to these? Yet, we believe we are moving in a real world which is common to all and in which each is equally interested. The terms I use are understood by another perhaps in

a different way from my own. Yet, we keep up the appearance of a common life with common ideals and purposes. The pupil and the teacher never think in identical ways. Still the one looks upon the other as his guide, and preceptor. The doctor has never beheld his own brain but talks volubly of the affections of his patient's brain. The king requires the police and the soldier to guard his life. Yet, he is the protector of the lives of his subjects. The prime minister is the chief adviser of the king and may yet be impeached for acts and measures of unpardonable unwisdom. The young are energetic but rash, the old are wise though weak; the poet and the philosopher amusing and instructing the king depend on him for their miserable pittance. The scientist who proudly proclaims the inventions and discoveries by which he has extended man's dominion over Nature is but earth fated to return to earth, and ashes to ashes. What is all that Science can achieve worth, if culture and civilization, æsthetics and ethics, religion and polity must one day perish with all their values—perish by a cataclysm which would reduce all earth to ashes through its gradual but certain approach to the sun. The empirical view thus gives no guarantee to the permanency of life on earth nor does it justify the values attached to truth, beauty, freedom and immortality. A spirit of grim irony seems to be ruling over this external world. There is beauty mingled with danger, pleasure with penalties, sweet power ending in bitter disappointment and death. Love is often deluded by selfish cruelty and friendship marred by treachery. Truth, justice and real sympathy are rare in individuals and rarer in Governments. Piety suffers, and cold-hearted parsimony thrives. Every religion while promising immortality scrupulously prescribes the method of interring the dead. God is good and great and wise, yet every born soul is exposed to ills. Now what do these self-contradictory and incongruous features of life indicate but that the secret of life empirically viewed is incomprehensible. Science and systems of philosophy may develop as the world marches on the road of empirical knowledge. Things may be made clearer and language may increase in precision, but how or why the world came to be what it is, what is to be its goal, either collectively or individually, we shall never be able to explain, for the simple reason that the external view is not the total view, that the waking state does not include the other states of the soul and that the intellect will confine us for ever within the limits of time and space, whereas as rational beings, we feel we are already above them. Hence no explanation offered from points of view restricted to waking life can transcend

it or include the great truth that lies at the back of life, at the back of all phenomena. The word *Maya* implies all this and more. (As Vidyaranya observes, every one who has endeavoured to account for the empirical world has been confronted by ignorance at every step, and has been obliged to confess that human wit could go only so far and no farther. Such explanations are within the province of *Maya* or *Avidya*, but that alone can be final truth which involves no further doubt.)

Bradley undertakes to prove that all except Reality is involved in self-contradiction. Now it is mysterious how Reality which he assumes to be in harmony with itself can so far contradict itself as to give rise to an appearance which is self-discrepant. Vedanta treats all manifestation as *Maya* or ignorance. Now, ignorance can be removed by knowledge, but no amount of the latter could remove contradictions if they were real. Thus the doctrine of ignorance makes the world intelligible by appealing to fact. Where Bradley stops confessing his inability to derive the manifold from the one Reality, Vedanta takes us a step further and shows how the nature of the problem makes the question illegitimate. That is the real value of the theory of *Maya*.

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF THE DOCTRINE

A great deal of literary dust has been kicked up by learned men discussing the historical origin of the doctrine. They could not obviously appreciate its value as a philosophic theory. Whether the theory occurs or not in the earliest Upanishads, or whether the implications of it are not met with in them, this is of very little significance to the seeker after truth. What is the doctrine? How does it support Vedanta? Does it harmonise with facts of life? How have the other systems of thought fared without a doctrine of the sort? These are the pertinent questions that may be profitably discussed in connection with *Maya*. (*Maya* is a power associated with God by which He creates or manifests Himself as the phenomenal world, which in consequence is often termed *Maya*. It cannot be a real power as in that case it has to be exercised over a world as real as God. That again diminishes the glory of God, for He cannot be the creator of a world equally real with Himself, unless with the help of materials co-eternal with Himself. This would be to deny the supremacy of God and to reduce Him to the rank of a multitude of things with equal claims to reality. To avoid this undesirable conception one must be forced to admit that He created by a mere fiat. In that case the world, His creation, can

pretend only to a subordinate degree of reality. God's willing, if real, implies want of perfection. Hence, even this fiat can be only of a secondary rank of reality. Thus God cannot have any relation to the world created by Him, unless He is supposed to enter it and manifest Himself as it. An individual soul a has relation to the world for he lives in it. God as such can have none. Consequently *Maya* is a power associated with God by the human intellect, but not sharing His reality.

It supports Vedanta, when after proving Brahman to be the sole reality the Vedantin proceeds to explain the world of distinctions. God is immutable, eternal, bliss and consciousness. Still He manifests Himself as the world through *Maya*. That is to say, while the Truth is proved to be unquestionable by reference to life and experience, *viz.*, the oneness of Reality, we have to derive the world directly from it somehow. *Maya* helps us here. It says the world is only Reality under a disguise. For, that reality is secondless can be logically proved. But how it comes to pass that Reality puts on the guise of the world with its perceivers, perception and percepts, actors and action, enjoyers and enjoyments, joys and sorrows—cannot be explained by reason but must be accepted as *Maya*. Herein lie the strength and the weakness of the theory. That in the world we see many things which cannot be explained satisfactorily, that the creation and process of the world seem to be altogether aimless, that our experience includes illusions, and that life is beset with countless ills, all culminating in death as the inevitable end—these tend to justify the notion that empirical life after all is but *Maya*, a mixture of truth and falsehood, appearance passing for reality. Its weakness consists in its inability to explain itself, which perhaps is really a virtue. For true *Maya* should not be self-explicable. It is not real.

The traditional doctrine of *Maya* while it refers empirical life to *Maya* also regards *Maya* as the positive principle of creation. This is its defect. *Maya* is only an explanation of the duality given in our experience. In the instance of a rope-snake, correct knowledge removes the appearance of the illusory snake. In the case of the dual world, on the contrary, Knowledge of its Brahmic nature will not cause it to disappear in the empirical sense. But the snake is not one of the empirical kind, while our consciousness is. Hence when knowledge arises, the snake, illusory in empirical life must disappear, whereas both the world that we perceive and the knowledge that arises are of the empirical order, and it stands to reason that such a knowledge cannot destroy such a world. The intuition of P.C. however enables us to destroy the

world from a transcendental view which lifts us beyond the empirical. From this standpoint there is not, there never was, and there never will be a world existing as second to the only Reality, *viz.*, P. C. With the disappearance of the world *Avidya* disappears too. How Brahman manifests itself is beyond human comprehension. But that it does so is seen from experience. At the same time we also perceive that the world is only of a lower degree of reality. In the higher sense, even the manifestation is a myth. Also, non-perception has a meaning only in a state in which perception is possible. Hence the world in sleep is not non-perceived but non-existent.

Waking delimits the sphere of speculation and causality is a creature of the waking intellect. Causality is thus restricted to waking as a manifestation, the intellect cannot soar beyond, and speculations never lead to final truths as the mind cannot overstep its own bounds. The intellect is only a faculty of division, of multiplicity. But we have another source of knowledge of the higher Reality in the form of intuition, which is another shape of Reality. Now intuition cannot reason but reason can work upon the material supplied by intuition. Thus we realise the oneness of all existence, though in presenting the fact in the terms of the intellect we become subjected to the laws of causality. Hence although the intellect cannot accomplish the derivation of the world from God, yet the reduction of the world to God is easily made possible for us by dumb intuition. Vedanta truly describes the genesis of the world as *Maya* or 'Ignorance.' The word simply indicates that the process of creation being anterior to the rise of the intellect is transcendental. To bring it within the jurisdiction of the intellect is *ultra vires*. The term One applied to Reality cannot have the same significance as in empirical life. For *one* cannot be conceived without a manifold. This comparison between the two Ones has led to profound philosophical errors. How to deduce the many from the One has always been an insoluble problem. Hegel has simply juggled with himself, for the conception of One to the exclusion of another is a feat beyond the intellect. Vedanta rightly looks upon the problem as due to an illusion. The many never proceeded or issued from the One. Hegel to make the impossible possible imagined a Nothing hidden in Being and extracted it to get a second entity. But he never succeeded in establishing a pure One independent of another. He ever lays emphasis on Unity in difference. Vedanta contemplates life from a higher point of view and shows that the Unity that all seek, and seek in

vain can only be realised through intuition, in P. C., altogether beyond the waking intellect.

This doctrine however is not vital to the system, which rests independently on the basis of experience. Vedanta goes out of its way in endeavouring to explain the incongruities of life, and the doctrine is offered as the simplest key to the riddle. Hence, critics who labour under the impression that the system stands or falls with this doctrine are pitiably mistaken, and are fruitlessly employed in spending their fury in demolishing it. Vedanta is built upon facts of life, universal experience; and its truth will not be affected by the fate shared by the doctrine of *Maya*. Yet, it is hard to conceive a more comprehensive doctrine, truer to experience, that might be propounded to justify the dualities of life.

"Wherever there are name and form, know that *Maya* is there". This is not a fanciful theory or a mere dogma. It is a brief and concise expression of our deepest experience. Science links up one empirical fact with another by means of a concept or law which does not enable us to transcend the sphere of phenomena, nor explain itself. Hence the truth of life is beyond the reach of science. Ethics that gives us a general notion of right and wrong cannot furnish an absolute standard of conduct or reveal the aim of life or creation. Religion acquaints us with methods of worship and prayer to a God who lives by our faith in Him and whose presence otherwise is neither missed nor desired as an indispensable element of life. The prayers of the good are unanswered, the caprices of the wicked gratified. Knowledge is oft prostituted to vile purposes to the promotion of vice, and to the persecution of virtue and innocence. Promising youths, the very props of their families die premature deaths, while the profitless old live on till they are felt as a burden to themselves and to society. The sweetness of love is oft marred by disappointment or desertion. Dumb nature with its stellar systems, oceans, mountains, rivers and forests is indeed ever wrapt in ineffable beauty. But what are her charms to the stricken heart or the bereaved soul? One human feeling outweighs in importance all the stars that spangle the firmament. Practical life is a standing enigma to science as well as to religion. What then is the solution of life's mystery?—This chequered work of good and evil, of beauty and perfidy?—Vedanta briefly replies, '*Maya*'.

CONTRADICTIONS OF LIFE

Yet, taken by the right handle, *Maya* can be made to serve the highest purposes of man. The intellect, the imagination and the

will are among its invaluable boons. By the training of these faculties by a course of selfless life and conduct, of inquiry and meditation we might tear through this fascinating veil of *Maya* and obtain a vision of Reality by which the final emancipation of the struggling spirit is accomplished. Power and wealth are sources of danger and disquietude to the selfish soul, but they are means of bringing relief and comfort to myriads of poor when rightly and freely utilised. Similarly, *Maya* veils the truth from us by presenting a world of plurality. But it has given us also a mind, the most precious of all gifts—by the culture of which we may transcend its limitations.

Repugnance to the doctrine of *Maya* can be overcome by a consideration of the countless contradictions with which life abounds. The following will serve as examples:—

(1) Waking is considered real, but dream unreal. Perception is explained by laws which cannot explain dream-perception. If waking is real then dream must be real. If dream is unreal then waking must be unreal.

(2) Sleep is nothing, we say, yet without it we cannot live and even kingship is laid aside for sleep.

(3) We say there are three states, but dream is never perceived by another.

(4) So are feelings and sensations.

(5) Feelings and sensations are individual but their objects are sought outside. In dream there is no outside.

(6) We depend on other things for our food and gratification, but gratification itself is individual.

(7) We are both solipsistic and pluralistic in our behaviour.

(8) One division of time we call the past, and another, the future, but our present cannot exist without continual reference to the dead and the unborn; and wisdom recommends forgetting of the one and disregard of the other.

(9) Man is born alone, dies alone, but in the intermediate stage, is necessarily social. His desires, instincts, well-being, ambitions, and even existence refer themselves to a society of which he is a member, without which neither birth nor growth of body or mind is possible.

(10) Sleep is a nothing, death is a nothing, we know nothing of either; yet we court the one and dread the other.

(11) Realism cannot be proved or can explain our sense of unity.

Idealism cannot explain the existence of another and the difference between real objects and ideas. Neither satisfies.

(12) Everyone moves in a private world of his own, yet he believes in a common world. He is solipsistic in his enjoyments and resolves, but pluralistic in action.

(13) Dream-world is not common, other egos are false but the waking world is common and other minds are real—though another mind can never be immediately known.

(14) As children we are helpless, but as grown-up scientists we measure space and time and predict events, establish theories and challenge the world.

(15) Truth we worship, though the world may not acknowledge it, but we seek testimony or harmony with others to discover or decide truth.

(16) A present perception is taken to be real, yet we test it by future experience.

(17) Hope and memory delude, yet we cannot give up the one, or dispense with the other.

(18) Life must end, we know, yet our behaviour presumes its eternality.

(19) We believe in the good, but evil stares us in the face.

(20) Consciousness seems immortal, but we see it disappear.

(21) Time, etc., are found to be illusions and appearances, yet we cannot regard anything as real which is not bound by them.

(22) We act as if we were free, but we discover we are bound.

(23) We are in a world which we regard as true and real, yet we seek Truth and Reality beyond.

(24) We are never happy, but we are ever seeking happiness.

(25) We discover error only when it is past, and yet we believe that we are at present correct in our views.

(26) Inference is drawn from the past, but is to hold good for the future.

(27) A future life is but an imaginary extension of the present, yet we stake our all in its defence.

(28) The man who taught the immortality of the soul is dead like others, yet we believe he is still living.

(29) We seem to love others but all the while we love ourselves only.

(30) We are told that the body is dust and ashes, yet we behave as if we were anxious to preserve it for all time. Where is our sincere conviction that the soul is independent and is all the better for its emancipation from the fetters of the body?

(31) Reason is our guide, but scepticism gives no comfort.

(32) Self-love is condemned but self-respect is exalted.

(33) The subject or the ego is pluralised though we feel it cannot be.

(34) Every man is selfish, but he expects others to be unselfish.

(35) Mind persists in dream and sleep, to explain identity of ego from day to day. But it disappears in sleep and dream, when these are found to be independent, and when sleep is known as P. C.

(36) Sleep and dream appear as past though they are not.

MAYA AND WESTERN THOUGHT

The philosophic value of *Maya* as the cause of creation can be better appreciated if we compare it with the hypotheses employed to the same end by other great thought-systems. In all idealistic systems in every form of theology the derivation of this world of multiplicity from the absolute One has been an unenviable and futile act. Kant is undecided whether to call the external world—the *Anatma*—real or unreal. Spinoza practically reduces it to an illusion. Plato makes it a realm of shadows. None however has succeeded in the impossible task. This must conclusively prove that the problem is hopeless simply because, as Vedanta affirms, we are here dealing with *Maya*. The other systems, with all their hard struggle to explain the genesis of the world have uniformly and utterly failed. Vedanta alone has from the first recognised the insolubility of the question, for *Maya* is intangible, unsubstantial, as thin as or even thinner than gossamer, and our efforts from within the folds of *Maya* to comprehend it are doomed to eternal failure. Vedanta has gone even further and discriminated between the problem of *Maya* and that of Reality. It has tackled the latter with undoubted success and thereby it has caused the former to dissolve itself like a summer cloud. In non-Vedantic systems these questions have been entangled in each other, and although speculation by itself is a course of very profitable, intellectual and moral exercise, no definite result has been attained by it in regard to the one or the other. So long as this confusion lasts we might safely predict that no finality will be

attained by speculation. Speculation unaccountably boasts of this impotence and claims it as its chief merit. The peculiar virtue of the *Maya* doctrine should not be overlooked. Every system of thought no doubt has tacitly confessed to its inability to derive the world of multiplicity from "One". But *Maya* with its perspicacity condemns the attempt to trace the manifold to a higher cause, because all such intellectual tendencies involve the initial error of not recognising the real nature of the problem. Hence *Maya* is not a mere admission of inability, but a revelation of the nature of the problem.

In the case of the realists there is much less to be said. They are fated to believe in mysteries without end. Pluralism is the stage of intellectual nonage. It befits indolent dispositions that will not subject themselves to the painful process of thinking beyond the present world out there, and certainly it is no explanation to say that the manifold spread before me is really the manifold. No ghost need come out of the grave to proclaim this secret. Over the realist the darkening power of *Maya* is supreme. But, to quote again from Victor Hugo,

> We are in prison; the door is immovable
> But in a hand sombre, unknown, invisible,
> Which passes at intervals
> Across the darkness, the hope of serious souls,
> One hears a bunch of mysterious keys,
> Rattling confusedly.—Translation by H.V.N.

CHAPTER XIV: ETHICS AND ESCHATOLOGY

FOUNDATION OF ETHICS

VEDANTA reveals the foundations of ethics and vindicates the goodness of God. If man's nature is divine then his selfishness is due to his ignorance of it and to a false attachment to his physical body with which he identifies himself. His idea of himself as an individual, with sensual and other appetites to gratify, is a delusion which sets him in untrue antithesis with others and gives rise to acts that further bind him to the world of duality and distinctions, of continual struggle ending in death.* No, the true aim of life is to make one realise the great principle, which manifests itself in diverse forms, and presents moral and intellectual contradictions not admitting of reconciliation from the phenomenal standpoint. Life indeed presents features of beauty and compels the human mind to rise above the shows and shadows of time and space and turn from them to the basic Reality. But this does not lead to permanent release. That demands feelings engendering volition or activity, not simply economic, which is unconscious, but theoretic which is rendered possible by a great depth of consciousness, without which the metaphysical nature of one's self cannot be realised. Herein lies the difference between Mysticism and Vedanta. The former aims at a certain feeling of oneness very often resulting from a course of physical and mental practices, while the latter insists upon a rational comprehension of the Reality unmasked. The behaviourists who imagine that we could have got on without the needless interposition of consciousness are unable to account for the phenomenon of consciousness. What is nature's object in providing us with a mind, a consciousness if, as Bergson claims, all knowledge is for action and all action is for life? Why should life have generated consciousness at all. For we see life's purposes perfectly satisfied without it in plants and lower animals. On the other hand, consciousness has become for us identical with life, so that we cannot imagine a condition of unconsciousness at all. The correct explanation is furnished by Vedanta. Consciousness is indispensable for the highest purpose of life, *viz.*, to *know*

* "Embodiedness is an idea due to ignorance."—S. B. I.1: 4.

the highest Reality and for human soul to slide back into the great sea of bliss from which it arose.

But to know its higher nature the soul must rise above its individuality which it can do only by conscious meditation on life as spread over the states and by acts of self-suppression. Economic activity is absolutely needful to preserve the mind and the body in such a healthy condition as would promote the main object. Thus according to temperaments a life of Brahmacharya, (strict celibacy) or a wedded life is equally commendable. *Yoga* may be practised to acquire control over the mind and the senses. Study and meditation, love and sympathy, faith and devotion are among the most efficacious means of elevating the soul to its natural plane. Veracity, courage, abnegation of self, charity and tolerance become central duties. Why should we love others? To dispel the false notion, the otherness. Why should we speak the truth? Because to utter a lie implies a selfish motive, a feeling resting on a narrow and untrue view of one's own nature. That we are identical with Pure Consciousness which without any effort manifests itself as this beautiful universe is the source of our moral strength and the fountain of our highest hopes. Ethics is thus the immediate offspring of Vedanta.

People that have bestowed no deep thought upon the subject have often raised their voice against Vedanta, alleging that it relaxes our notions of right and wrong, since when one feels his identity with God he may imagine himself free from all moral and social restraint. This is a grievous error. The sense of divine identity must necessarily mean the breaking to pieces of the outer shell of individuality, the annihilation of all attachment and the extinction of selfish appetites or desires. How then can a man be guilty of sinful or vicious acts who can have no selfish motive, who has no joys or pains of his own apart from those of society? The true Vedantin would feel ashamed even at the recollection of his whilom acts of self-gratification. For in him all evil tendencies are now completely crushed. Besides, the objection is raised by those who treat the identity as one of mathematical quantities as expressed in the equation X=Y, without heeding the moral and spiritual implications of transcendental monism. Knowledge of Truth imposes moral and spiritual obligations, as a matter of inevitable necessity from which there can be no escape, or desire to escape.* Spiritual truths admit of no display or advertisement. The riches of the soul are not laid out in

* "Even the Vedas cannot purify one without character."—S.B. III. 1: 10.

glass, crockery and labour-saving machines. Spiritual conviction requires no experiment, no demonstration, no theatrical show. Spiritual struggle is in the inner life and the most powerful organisations can hardly affect it. True courage of the soul is rarely seen except in voluntary acceptance of privations and poverty, in acts of self-denial and mercy. The physical side of *Yoga* may to some extent be exhibited but not the inner victory over the torments of the will. The presence of a great soul is felt by a kind of softness that bathes the surroundings. It makes no noise, causes no social ripple, and is a divine silence whose peace is unrealisable by the ambitious or the self-seeking. Triumphs of art and the resources of science leave the enlightened soul untouched, merged in its own ecstasy, which is beyond the imagination of the will-tortured vulgar. The Released boasts of nothing and craves for nothing. He enjoys life in entirety, for it is to him unalloyed bliss. The world likewise is to him sublimated into a perfection and a joy. Call that not selfishness, which can rise only when the lower self is completely trampled upon and crushed. Truths are tested by universalising them, not by ignorant condemnation. An active religious life is not to be confounded with the mood of effortless resignation that comes over those that avoid exertion of all kinds.

Problems of ethics are insoluble in other systems of thought. What is right? No adequate reply has been received. While all instinctively admit the distinction between right and wrong and acknowledge the irresistible power of the categorical imperative, they are not able to define the terms distinctly, which has naturally led to desperate confusion. Vedanta's pronouncement is clear and decisive. That is right which helps us to return to our higher nature above the individual distinctions, and that is wrong which would forge new links on to the chain that keeps us bound to the lower. Vedic injunctions claim to be based on this fundamental principle and are as such a practical code of morals as well as of spiritual duties to be observed by man. Vedanta can throw light upon religious dogmas and justify them. "Be merciful and charitable," ordain the scriptures. Why? "Ye shall so enter the Kingdom of God". Quite so, says Vedanta. The Kingdom of God is your own higher self and no reward need be appended to an act which in the truest sense is natural to oneself. Besides Nature will not allow of a deviation from her course with impunity. For, behold the inevitable ills of unethical life.*

* "The Kingdom of God is only for those in whom self-denial, continence and righteousness are established."—Prasna Up. I. 15.

The most beautiful thing in life is Life itself, for it is Brahman, the highest reality, your own sweet self. Even the external beauties derive their sweetness from their relation to you. Every act, word and thought of yours must therefore be such as to enable you to realise it. The stream of life is flowing towards this consummation. Any permanent deviation even of a single particle from that course is impossible. For the force of the entire flood from behind is urging it down towards the only goal. Attempts to thwart the tendency made by man's whim or caprice might seem to obtain a temporary success, but the economy of Nature converts the apparent success itself into a penalty and draws every soul by an ever wakeful force back into the general flow. A selfish man might revel in the gratifications that wealth and power secure, but the soul receives thereby a set-back, a new taint; and consequently its circuit of wandering in the ambit of births and deaths is inexorably lengthened, subjecting it to new ills created by its perversity. A Vedantin, on the contrary, recognising his oneness with the Principle of Life in incessant action, conceives the deepest interest in its methods and processes, and will actively resist all tendencies to erect walls of separation between man and man. He will co-operate with alacrity to hasten the advent of a millennium not of universal brotherhood but of universal self-hood.

DEFECTS IN SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHIC SYSTEMS

The absence of a definite scheme of eschatology is a serious defect in philosophic systems. As modern schools of thought are more or less independent of religion and positive in method they can neither adopt the dogmas of religion nor supply plausible theories of their own in their stead. This is most deplorable. A philosopher must have something definite to say or to believe in concerning his own future after he passes away from the precincts of life, and as he rightly esteems himself superior by his intelligence or conduct to the man in the street he must distinguish with regard to this future between what awaits him and what a less favoured brother has to face. Every one is not born to the same destiny here. Neither can the future treat all alike. Otherwise, the reality of the present distinctions of position, culture and character would become immaterial and illusive. If the soul should, on the other hand, vanish at death then the glories of life, be they intellectual or moral, are a mere mockery. Do not let one answer that the stream of humanity will flow on without break or intermission, and every generation lives on in

future generations. Though man individually may have a limited lot, yet humanity will go on eternally perfecting itself, rising to ever higher pitches of glory, power and happiness. This is a balm of fancy pertaining in kind to the green meadow and the crystal water of mirage which the philosopher or the scientist conjures up for his comfort, for no theory that reason can advance will carry the thinker beyond the three score and ten of the present life.

Let me examine this modern basis of ethics. A man ought to lead a good life, in order that a higher race of beings may come into existence, that perhaps the earth may be peopled with perfected humanity or that the superman may evolve himself in course of time. In other words, we are to bridle up our low passions, repress selfishness, love all and cultivate nobility and charity, in order that many centuries hence an improved type of rational beings may appear on earth, who would live in love and harmony. Is the plain man able to sympathise with such an ideal? Can he appreciate it? How many even among the cultured classes would forego a present advantage, to facilitate or accelerate the birth of conditions favouring the appearance of the Superman? And are we really, without any delusion, influenced by such sublimely aerial motives in our daily acts? The soldier, no doubt, fights for the ideals of his country, his hearth and home; but these are present possessions, immediate objects of desire or esteem. Failure in his duty will result in present inconvenience, loss of liberty or independence, woes hateful to a noble soul. As regards the Superman, who would sweat and bleed now? for his possible or impossible appearance a myriad years hence? Who would suffer present privations to secure the well-being of a creature who might not after all be born before all beings on earth are burnt to ashes or frozen to death? Besides, if a good man is likely to improve society a bad man is as likely to corrupt or deprave it. There should thus be an incessant war waged by the former against the latter, and the issue of such a fight would be dubious unless the good also happen to be strong and powerful. And this era of uninterrupted warfare must intervene as an inevitable step before the ushering into existence of an era of universal love. Three-fourths of the human race must perish in the struggle before a more humane humanity can appear. In the next place, who are the good that can claim this privilege of clearing the earth of all the undesirables? What is to be their criterion of judgment? We thus go back again to where we started from. What is good, what is right? The idea of a future race is a mere will-o'-the-wisp and cannot supply a stable basis for ethics. Moreover, who

is to guarantee the progress of humanity or the eternality of the earth? Men might degenerate from generation to generation as much as morally advance, and earth might be approaching the sun in course of time sufficiently near to be consumed by its heat. Such contingencies no science or human effort can prevent or provide against. What then can be the value of genius, learning, morality or human history when a celestial cataclysm might annihilate all life on earth? Even a contemplation of such possibility must destroy faith in positivistic ethics. Evidently the purely empirical view of life which has become fashionable is absolutely suicidal and washes away the very foundations of ethics. The concerns of the world are peacefully going on, not so much owing to the philosophic basis of ethics as to the influence of religion, which for centuries has moulded the lives and opinions of men in general. Even scientists and philosophers owe their ability to conceive higher moral ideals to the start which they have received from religion and ancient tradition. Such obligations they would do well not to forget.

A satisfactory theory of ethics must rest on some belief, vague or obscure, as to the values of acts in this life as bearing on what should succeed it. Values restricted to this life are inconstant and deceptive. The moral law would seem to be meant not for this life merely but to hold universally and eternally. It would cease to be moral if it were not eternal. And values are no values unless they are expressible in terms that imply spiritual betterment of which they are a guarantee. In the next place, spiritual life is democratic in the extreme. The worth of a soul is individual and should not be determined by the worth of the family or society to which it happens to belong. Singly does man enter and singly he quits this theatre of joys and woes. Singly he weaves the pattern of his destiny. While philosophy and science are eloquent in their description of man's place and privileges in the perfected condition of the world, they are silent about the fate of the individuals of the moment and about their own fate. Unable to vouch for the immortality of every soul as a soul, past or present, why, what may the individual derive from a poetic contemplation of joys that he cannot partake or scenes that he cannot witness? Any religious eschatology, however childish, would be far superior to the pedantic and proud negation of it on the part of philosophy. Until this defect is remedied no theory of ethics can pretend to objective validity.

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

Thus ethics would take its logical stand not only on the freedom but the immortality of the soul. Our power to discriminate between right and wrong, our condemnation and approval of conduct in varying circumstances, all social institutions intended to regulate the active relations between individuals, our instinctive tendencies to uphold what we consider to be right and oppose what is taken to be wrong, make it evident that we have freedom of moral action. On the other hand, since we do not find the moral law executing itself completely in this life, since it is unreasonable that such a law could lose its validity at death, since in this manner life seems to be incomplete and to put forth bonds of affinity to a new sphere of action extending beyond the present, and since our sense of justice will not be satisfied with a contemplation of imperfect, incomplete, positively handicapped or successfully tyrannical lives, the immortality of the soul would seem to be the elementary presumption or demand of the ethical nature of man constituted as he is. The categorical imperative of the moral instinct categorically establishes the immortality of the soul. And this inference is further corroborated by the nature of the soul which as consciousness or subject is not liable to destruction like any object.

Hence the dumb silence of philosophers on eschatology points to the defect of their method and the necessity of its being supplemented by the dogmas of religion. Every thinker, whatever his intellectual conviction, being but a mortal has to form some opinion or other about the future of his soul. If till his death this serious side of life does not engage his attention or if he deliberately ignores it or gives it up as a hopeless or insoluble problem he will not be acting with that prudence and wisdom which he invariably displays in every concern of his life. And what after all would his life have been to him but a temporary display of activity and erudition, aiming at nothing, leading to nothing, beyond the sphere which he has one day to quit finally? Joys and sorrows, triumphs and discomfitures, pride and humiliation, knowledge and ignorance, even life and death will strike him as mere shadows void of significance, a stagic illusion calculated to delude the thoughtless, but not the wise. A soul that does not survive the death of the body inflicts death on the universe itself. For, to the soul the universe has no meaning except as the percept, with an inexorcisable ghost of it remaining eternally unseen, serving only as the imaginary background of the seen.

One may still urge that ethics need not require immortality as a necessary corollary. The values of life may be absolute values, unrelated to consequences, and the higher ethical law compels man to love truth and right for their own sake, irrespective of reward or punishment, gratification or mortification. We may now examine this position. In the lower stages of intellectual development men like children are moved by hope and fear, by promise and threat. As they advance in culture they feel that right must be respected and honoured for its own sake, without an eye to results or fruits. But what is right which thus obtains a prominent place in our esteem? Why should it be so honoured? True psychology might explain this high regard paid to righteousness as due to nothing more than our past experience in which normally we found a righteous act followed by agreeable consequences, producing feelings of peace and satisfaction. Hence it is not true that righteousness is by itself lovable. We are so certain of the pleasurable consequences of a noble act that we cease to think of them when we have to do a good deed or a duty. Life-values, therefore, really do not drop within life but implicitly transcend it and are shorn of significance unless the soul's immortality is admitted.*

Let us now consider religious eschatology and compare it with that of exoteric Vedanta. Hinduism and Buddhism believe in innumerable rebirths till the soul is tired of the travails of incarnated life and shunning all forms of worldly joy turns the will back from affirmation and seeks eternal release by denial. The individual soul is accompanied from birth to birth by Karmic, sensory and psychic impressions gathered in the past life which determine its lot in the next. Its joys and woes are thus its own creations and the drama in which the will is the actor and the spectator at the same time closes only when the soul shall have acquired true knowledge and triumphed over *Maya* or the illusory joys of embodied life. In these two religions the soul is an entity distinct from the body. The Christian and Mahomedan eschatologies greatly differ from the Hindu. The idea of the soul is not clear. It is not conceived as an entity that can exist independently of the body, nor is it wholly identified with it. Their position is indeterminate and ambiguous. When a man dies his soul is believed to remain attached to his dead body or to be confined to the grave till the day of judgment, when God is expected to revive the body and restore it to the condition in which it was during life. In other words, the Christians as well as

* Gita. II—12 & 13.

the Mahomedans do not believe that the soul can act unless when clothed in the gross material body such as we own in this life. This shows how crude their notions are of the soul as spirit. In fact, they do not distinctly and definitely explain the nature of the soul. It is not regarded as of the nature of consciousness and its origination is a mystery which is not unravelled. Are we to take that every new-born child has a new soul recently embodied? If so, did it exist in any form before its embodiment, if not, how came it into existence at all? Was it newly created by God out of nothing, in which case it must again resolve finally into nothing? If the soul is unborn in its nature and unaffected by the changes of the body, then it must have existed either in an embodied or a free condition before it came into the flesh in the form of the child. Hence a past embodied life must be admitted for the soul, or the view that the soul can exist only in connection with a body must be wholly given up. Similarly, with reference to the condition after death, either the soul can or cannot dispense with the body. In the former case, the care that is taken of the dead body and the elaborate ceremonies of interment seem to be unphilosophical and meaningless. In the latter case as no human device can help to keep the fleshly body for all time, the soul's duration would seem to be limited to that of the body. Immortality of the soul would thus be an illusion. Besides, the body such as we possess being God's creation cannot retain its vitality longer in any case than it ordinarily is seen to do. If the soul originated in time then it must in time cease to exist. Again, supposing the question of the soul surviving death is somehow got over, the next difficulty is to describe the sort of existence or life it is to lead in Heaven or in God's presence. A Christian, being a dualist, the idea of its getting absorbed in the deity is unacceptable, even positively repugnant to him. While he clings to immortality he has to define the nature of the everlasting life that begins for the soul after death. If it means singing, unending hallelujahs then nothing would be more wearisome to a sensible or modest being. Fancy a Mill or a Kant so employed for all time! It is, of course, a confession of human ignorance as to the kind of felicity enjoyed by the free souls. Besides, Christianity aims only at salvation or deliverance from sin, and readmission to paradise or Heaven. That is the main idea. And the notion of life in Heaven seems to differ in no way from that on earth so familiar to us all, except that there is no sin and consequently no death. The eternal presence of God ensures uninterrupted happiness to all the inmates of Heaven. But is that

a life of absorption in love, contemplation or action? The condemned souls, of course, will suffer unremitting torture in hell-fire, dancing with pain all the time. Whether life so conceived in Heaven can guarantee the absence of ills is altogether problematic. If God's omnipotence is sufficient to effect the impossible, an observation of the present life teeming with contradictions and woes does not encourage us to believe that God would succeed better in securing universal felicity in a fantastical Heaven. At the very start, God muddled over creation. Vedanta is far more sensible. It declares that where there is even an appearance of duality, ('Yatra anya diva bhavati') there can dwell no true lasting happiness. Christian eschatology is no doubt sufficient to furnish ethics with a sort of basis involving immortality, but is too primitive to satisfy the demands of culture.

Lastly, it may be contended that a man naturally loves the right and the true, and the inducements of reward as well as the threats of punishment are not indispensable as aids to keep him on the path of duty and righteousness. This is to conceive man not as the poor frail being that we know him to be, on whom all the moral and religious restraints imposed by tradition and culture are, alas, found to be too feeble and rarely adequate, but as an angel of spiritual perfection whose presence on earth converts it into very Heaven. Facts of daily life would rebel against such a view. In the Bhagavad Gita the doctrine of works without expectation of results justifies itself by being appended to that of immortality, so that it only means: "If you as an immortal soul desire freedom from bondage of *Karma*, act without any other motive". It is thus evident that exoteric Vedanta requires on its ethical side *Karma* and *rebirth* as the logical corollaries of the esoteric doctrines of the oneness of existence, immortal and blissful and the identity of the individual with the Brahmic soul. Hinduism and Buddhism are in this respect more perfect systems of belief than the rest, because more ethically and metaphysically advanced.

CHAPTER XV: SOLIPSISM AND VEDANTA

SOLIPSISM is the belief that 'I alone exist.' This is an absurd position for one to take up seriously in a real society composed of really distinct individuals with equal claims to their right of existence. But it is evidently irrefutable, and no thought-system pretending to certitude of its truths has been able to steer clear of this standing menace to its acceptability and credit. Every thinker discussing the reality of other minds speaks with bated breath and behaves as if the death's head solipsism continually haunted his imagination, and stood before it as an irremovable terror. Adverse critics are satisfied with pointing out in a system its liability to lapse into solipsism which is quietly assumed as a sure method of *reductio ad absurdum.* Since subjectivism, absolutism, idealism, pantheism, and even realism, when pushed to their logical issues, develop the undoubted features of solipsism held in such universal dread and abhorrence, it would not be out of place to enquire into its real nature and discover what invests it with this invulnerableness and how far it can be made amenable to sweet reasonableness. If it is absolutely irrefutable, what does it lack to make it acceptable or divest it of its repulsiveness? Even the highest truth cannot commend itself to men's favour on any other ground than that it can bear no contradiction. This is sufficient to rouse in impartial minds the suspicion that, after all, solipsism might not be so odious, and might in some of its aspects present characteristics of the deepest truths vital to man.

The terms 'I', 'the subject' and 'consciousness' are peculiar in their significations and logically preclude all plurality. It is nonsense to talk of more than one 'I' or more than one subject or consciousness.* All the rest of mankind for me must be classed among 'you' or 'them', that is to say, among objects opposed to me

* "We are spirits clad in veils,
Man by man was never seen ;
All our deep communing fails
To remove the shadowy screen"—*C.P. Cranch.*

as the subject or the perceiving consciousness. This is an inalienable prerogative of the very notions conveyed by those terms. Every form of idealism, and not mere by subjectivism, regarding as it does the whole world as a mere idea of the mind, must necessarily include the so-called other minds in the world perceived by the thinker; and, therefore, asserting a single mind becomes guilty of solipsism. Kant's transcendental idealism, Hegel's absolute idealism, Gentile's actual idealism, Berkeley's and Fichte's pure idealism must submit to this common charge, however emphatically they might protest against it. To escape from the awkwardness, a puppet has been set up under the name of the cosmic mind or the transcendental ego. But the device is futile. If the whole world is a concept of the mind, so is the cosmic mind or the transcendental ego, which is simply a generalisation of my own mind. Even scientific realism and pluralism of modern days are at bottom conventional bubbles that cannot stand a controversial breeze. Bertrand Russel confesses that the only truth that can stand logical scrutiny is solipsism but that nevertheless he cannot bring himself to believe in it. He would rather take the world to be real and to contain many independent minds, though to prove their existence he cannot pass beyond his own mind upon whose verdict he must absolutely rely. Solipsism can extend its dominion even over pantheism. If all is God then I am God and therefore I am all the reality. While on the one hand it is clearly opposed to all our convictions and cravings, our tendencies and activities. To deny other minds including our own parents, no philosophic position grounded in vigorous logic can avoid the ultimate fate of relapsing into solipsism.

VEDANTIC VIEW

Vedanta helps to unravel this mystery. The human soul is a spiritual entity, according to the Taittiriya Upanishad, deep down in man, wrapt up in five involucres or sheaths, one over the other, the subtlest being the innermost, while the gross body is the outermost. At every one of these levels man identifies himself, for the time being, with the particular sheath and takes it to be the true ego. Thus at first he looks upon his body as himself, and, as at this level he perceives innumerable other bodies like his own, he recognises the plurality of the elements on this plane of experience. That is to say, he admits the existence of other egos like himself associated with bodies. Solipsism at this level naturally strikes him as absurd. From this physical ego we may pass on to the next level of man's consciousness, *viz.*, the sensory sphere. Here, again, he perceives that his cognition of external objects depends on the vigour and health of his senses, as distinguished from those of

others. Hence, to account for the differences of experience. He conceives the sensory ego to move in a world of multiplicity. The third wrappage from outside is the mind with its volitions. This is the mental ego which, also, contrasted with the other similar egos, is discovered to be on the level of plurality. Solipsism can have no place here. The fourth is the sheath of the intellect with its faculties of discrimination, identification and judgment. On this level the intellectual ego finds itself in the midst of a manifold. Solipsism cannot function here. Finally, the fifth or the innermost involucre covering the soul is the sphere of feeling or enjoyment. The enjoying ego must retain its individuality in the midst of many others in the world similarly occupied. Those are the very last limits of multiplicity or plurality. And the ego standing at this level cannot truly represent itself as the only existence. Solipsism would be unfaithful to experience.

We shall now determine the nature of the ego which lies beneath these five sheaths and which in fact is the spiritual essence of man. An ego certainly it is not, for it retains none of the individualising characters belonging to the sheaths. By itself it has no individual feeling, willing or knowing. Yet, it is that which wills, feels, and cognises with the help of the involucral vehicles. As the space in a room is particularised by the walls enclosing it, but becomes undistinguishable from space in general when the walls are knocked down, and as the expression "room-space" does not really indicate a division in universal space, so man as spirit is one and indivisible. Solipsism from this standpoint is the profoundest truth.

We can now account for the apparently opposed aspects presented by solipsism. The Universal Spirit, the God in man, transcends the laws of time and space. Beyond speech and thought is Reality, knowing neither part nor division and carrying no marks of individuality. It manifests itself in the successive levels of consciousness, identifying itself temporarily with each of these sheaths, denominating itself as the body-ego, sense-ego, mind-ego, the intellect-ego and the enjoying ego. As ego it unfolds its character of being the secondless one, and as limited by the vehicles it announces its entry into the spheres of plurality for functioning at the different levels. In the thought, "I alone exist", we recognise the grand truth that every man as the undifferentiated spirit is the only Reality, and the perceptual world is but the spirit objectifying it. On the other hand, the plurality of minds is unquestionable, as at the mind-level in the spirit functions a world of multiplicity. While the distinctions observed among the phenomenal forms of spirit are infinite, such as the body, the senses,

the mind and the objects of enjoyment pertaining to the individual souls, that which simultaneously manifests itself as the ego and the world is the inmost essence in man and is not only the Reality but the entire Reality. It is fitly signified by the terms: ego, subject, the seer or consciousness, none of which can strictly admit of plurality. The ego-instinct is a mystery to psychology and receives its explanation only in the teachings of Vedanta, proving thus that these are based on truths deeply imbedded in the universal instincts of man. Vedanta justifies the views of all great thinkers, who spoke from a vision of the truth through a fundamental solipsism of which they were unconscious and which they endeavoured to repudiate. But solipsism is the irrepressible voice of the higher-ego. That solipsism is reprehensible, that looks upon the ego divided from the non-ego as the only reality, for it is absolutely untrue.

Solipsism has the veneer of philosophy but a heart of rotten wood. It stares like an ogre every system in the face. No speculation has successfully banished it from the realms of thought and yet none can tolerate it. Vedanta takes the ego to be one of degrees. The lowest being confounded with the body is rightly branded. That which regards itself as independent of the body and of the present life is one degree higher. For its earthly life will be modulated so as to make it a preparation for a happy future. But the highest ego must be all-inclusive, no longer an individual or an ego but Reality itself. For the essence of the ego, however regarded, cannot be an objective entity. Only an ego can be the essence of an ego. But the defects of the lower egos are removed in the highest, though still it is the only term by which to describe it. In this transcendental sense the highest, purest ego is all Reality and there is, there can be nothing else beside. This is the truth underlying solipsism which has endued it with eternal life. In vain you strike it down. It rears up its head again with double vigour. Vedanta shows that it is heaven-born and it carries with it a charmed life. 'I am Brahman', 'I am all', 'there is nothing else', these are words vibrating with immortal truth. The other terms, 'Self', 'God', 'Reality', 'Truth', 'Consciousness' cannot approach the word 'I' in its peculiar power to convey that intuition, which is beyond speech and understanding, and which takes us to the deepest depths of our nature. These can only raise objective concepts of reality and hence are unfaithful as representations of its true nature, which will not allow of objectification and which can only be immediately felt as 'I'. I am familiar to myself much better as 'I', than as the subject, the self, etc., which are acquired and learned concepts. Besides, my reality is ever

unquestioned. Whitehead says, things around are real in the same sense in which I am. But that is disputable. For, while I seek eminence for the reality of the not-me, I do it ever under the presumption of my own. If someone tells me, 'You are unreal', the words fall on deaf ears. I cannot conceive my unreality. I may, when completely secluded, put aside the notion of the reality of other things; but I can never be relieved of the sense of my own reality.

CHAPTER XVI: VEDANTA AND POSITIVISM

THE EMPIRICAL AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL

OPINION has varied so much on the three main topics of Philosophy, *viz.*, mind, matter and God, or the self, the non-self and the Absolute, that some thinkers have assumed the position of what is known as scepticism or nihilism. These either doubt or deny the real existence of the triad. As the class includes some great names we shall consider how far Vedanta would justify or refute their views. In the first place, it must be owned that to doubt a statement or theory which lacks logical consistency or other evidence in its favour, marks a self-reliant intellect of a high order, clear in concept and careful in judgment, altogether a rare blessing, and should certainly be preferred to the credulous mind of the mob, who like dumb-driven cattle follow blindly the man who owes his thoughts to no other; but it is not given to any man to be a wholesale doubter. Life, at least, must be admitted before all things, and activity is needed to preserve it. The most thorough-going sceptic must in his daily acts necessarily betray his belief in the law of causation and without a myriad such beliefs it is impossible to live even for a moment. A hungry man must seek for food. Hunger and food cannot be illusory. Weather and convention require clothing. Ailments necessitate recourse to a doctor. Safety of property demands police vigilance, and the security of society depends on a powerful government. To doubt the reality of matter and mind, the reality of their appearance must at least be first assumed. Hence in one sense life is impossible without belief in the reality of things, but doubt also has its own place, and characterises a highly rational and circumspect mind. We talk of the external world. What do we know of it, except through our senses ? If our knowledge thereof is solely derived from their report, what about its real nature or its independent existence ? How can we assure ourselves of the latter ? The law of causation itself is seen to hold only among the percepts, the phenomena. Still, we justify our proceeding from the percepts, as the effect, to the imperceptible as the cause. Thus matter is reduced to a mere phantasm. On the other side, what do we know of mind except as feeling, will

and thought? As these continually change and each implies the rest, they can be only the manifestations of some ulterior entity, which, nevertheless, we can never directly experience. Meanwhile, we find that an object and a subject presuppose each other, being so mutually related that each taken separately is a mere abstraction. If then these unquestionable elements of daily life, *viz.*, mind and matter, themselves fare so badly, what can be said of God as the Infinite Being, the Creator? We are familiar only with finite personalities. An infinite person, is it not a contradiction in terms? There are, besides, the ethical difficulties and the problems of evil, creation and a future life ever waiting for solution. Yet, the causal instinct working in us without a moment's respite, ever torments us with the quest bearing on life, consciousness and matter. Surely I did not create myself or the world. If all these are illusions, even so they require a real basis. But this, neither our nature nor our capacity can enable us to discover. Such is the conclusion of an honest sceptic who hesitates to embrace popular doctrines, not because he is indifferent to truth, or to life's riddle, but because his truth must be of a high order and his solution sanctified by the high priest of reason. Now Vedanta can present him with a view which, while it conforms to reason appeals to direct experience and gives the perplexed soul a peace and a felicity which transcend the understanding. It condemns the partial view of life confined to the waking state which is the fertile field of insoluble problems, and it lifts the enquirer to a plane from which he can cast his eyes on the entire life presented in all its aspects, sleep, dream and waking. He then realises his identity with it, which is beyond all time and space, beyond change and variation, beyond thought and speech. The latter pertain to the empirical sphere, which the enlightened soul shall have left behind in passing into the transcendental from which plurality and pain, doubt and ignorance, desire and travail, shall have been once for all excluded.

It is usually urged that morality, to have some worth, should be faced with trial and choice, that pleasure cannot please without previous suffering, that a life of static felicity is too insipid to a nature fond of variety and adventure, that in continual endeavour there is a delight, which is unknown to a state of accomplished bliss, that our zest in life mainly originates from its social side, *viz.*, love of fame, sympathy of friends, approbation of the worthy, fight for the right, service and self-sacrifice. No destiny, therefore, that removes the soul eternally from such a sphere of plurality of life and action, and causes it to revert to a state of inane oneness can, however free from pain and evil, be accepted or

desired. The considerations urged above are no doubt powerful and must exercise irresistible sway over minds accustomed to empirical valuation of truths. The advantage in terms of the present life alone can incline such natures in favour of any doctrine, however fortified it might be by reason or warranted by experience. But it must be remembered that empirical life, that is, life as manifested in the waking state, is not the everlasting life which the immortal soul can look forward to; and it is unreasonable on the one hand to aspire to deathlessness and on the other to expect at the same time the continuance of conditions inseparable from the realms of death. The two are incompatible.

Empirical life is the region of plurality and of desire, hence also of morality. As the member of a family and of society, man has to cultivate virtue and shun vice. As an individual, he becomes conscious of wants and puts forth efforts to have them supplied. In this condition in which we seek pleasure from an external source, the continuance of the same state is dull and wearisome, and the mind naturally flies from object to object looking for novelty and variety. Indulgence of unbridled fancy keeps the individual ever excited and deprives him of the power to contemplate and reflect. A persistence in the habit leads to terrible catastrophes shocking to common people, but quite intelligible to psychologists. This ceaseless hankering after exciting scenes and pursuits disqualifies a man to discern true happiness which only the contemplative men can intuite. Waking life, beautiful as it is, is not immortal. It is at once a fall and an endeavour to rise to Reality. If it were the all, then we should not have known discontent. If we did not bring with us an original impress of absolute bliss we should not seek, as we do, for happiness every moment, nor be dissatisfied, as we are, with every form of pleasure which begins to pall as soon as it is had. We feel like fish thrown out of water. We behave as if we have lost some invaluable treasure and as if we were ever trying to recover it. This ceaseless quest, alas, comes to a pathetic close at death and from this point of view, every life, uncrowned with enlightenment, is a pitiful tragedy. We might, in passing, point to this fact as an additional reason that supports the soul's immortality. Life is a series of endeavours to recover a something lost, and the endeavour implies both the reality of the bliss that is sought and the certainty of its recovery, which must needs guarantee repeated incarnations to the deathless soul. Hence our impatience of sameness and love of variety, due to our imperfect state, make us incompetent to judge of the higher felicity which for us seems static and monotonous. But we forget that the very

distinctions, static and dynamic, are possible only in the sphere of time and change and become meaningless so soon as these are overpassed.

Again, it is true that morality has value in proportion to the obstacles encountered and the temptations resisted. But this holds only in the transitional stage. All right conduct is but the means of attaining to our higher selfhood, the very core of righteousness, and must involve opposition and fight so long as we are in the region of plurality. But to apotheosise this struggle, however inevitable, is to transfer to the means an allegiance due only to the end. There is joy in contending for the true and the right, because their attainment is itself a delight. To wish for an eternal continuance of martial conditions in the fancied interests of morality is to deny the final triumph of good over evil, of truth over error and of right over wrong, a position which Vedanta will never countenance. Also, pleasure is indeed enhanced by suffering, but no one courts suffering for that reason. Is not suffering accepted as inevitable, while happiness is the aim of all effort? If, therefore, in the higher state suffering can find no place, will it constitute a defect? To think so is sheer perversity. Our very hope and expectation of a higher state convicts the present as one of imperfection, an alloy of joy and suffering, a medley of lofty aspirations and low accomplishments. We cannot hence rightly assess the higher felicity from our experience of dualistic life. Even social activities derive their value from their necessity in the sphere of plurality. But because these are impossible in the undifferentiated oneness of the highest reality we are not justified in stigmatising the latter as inane, for the highest Reality is the highest Life, Life in the truest and widest sense. The question, what shall succeed our attainment of selfhood, cannot logically arise, for succession and happening are possible only within the bounds of time and change, and are unmeaning when these are transcended. An everlasting life in which there is room for action, for successive events and enjoyments, is only an illusory duplication of the present empirical life, unwarranted by reason or experience.

HUMANISM OR POSITIVISM

The absolute passivity of scepticism and its uncheering negativity made room for Humanism, or the religion of humanity. The genius of Comte provided Positivism as a system in which was combined the service of man with the formal observances of religion. The main principle is that man as an individual is but an abstraction. He is a reality only as member of a family, of a

community or of humanity as a whole. He succeeds in life only when he adjusts his self-regarding and self-sacrificing activities so as to result in perfect harmony; otherwise, nature imposes inevitable penalties which he must necessarily pay for his delinquencies. To believe in God or a future state is a superstition suited to the intellectual nonage of humanity. It did once serve as a temporary prop to morality. The age of its utility is, however, long since past. To confine our aim to living harmonious lives in families and societies is the demand of modern culture. The deepest emotions and energies of man must be exercised in the service of humanity. Men renowned for goodness, justice, mercy and love must be worshipped, and days must be set apart for meditation on the virtues of national heroes. Metaphysics is *ignis fatuus*. Immortality of the soul is a silly fancy. Humanity alone is immortal and our duty is so to live as to hasten the appearance on earth of a perfected society of human beings.

This is a neat set of doctrines calculated to satisfy a practical mind, bent on making the best of a life whose nature is hopelessly inscrutable, a mind that feels its vocation more for industrial, political and trade activities than for anything else. But a reflective, rational mind turns with aversion from such an ideal. Why? Because it is untrue. Is the one concern of Nature to produce perfected humanity? The dumb millions of God's creatures on earth would seem loudly to deny it. The countless worlds distributed over the stellar systems would heartily laugh at such a homocentric obsession. Besides, on this principle a tiger may anticipate a time when a perfected tiger-race may have the whole earth turned into a wilderness filled with its prey, and with all trace of humanity clean swept out.

In the next place, is an individual man an abstraction? We may admit that in a family or a society it is the majority or the most powerful that count. But spiritual life is open only to the individual. Admission to Heaven is only in single file. Two cannot enter it together unless it is conceived as an earthly building. Man's communion with God is his private privilege. The most potent monarch cannot force his admission to it. That is the blunder of positivism. It overlooks the radically individual nature of man as spirit. Otherwise we should expect organisations of birth and death to be possible as you find those of commerce and polity. In other words, it must be possible for souls to be born in company or to die in company. But birth and death are unconscious of otherness. It may be asked, is every individual then to be conceived as possessing a soul of its own? Yes, says Vedanta.

But individuality or the plurality of souls have relation only to this imperfect state. In itself a soul is spirit, the whole of Reality comprehending subject and object. Besides, how can a conscious spirit be less than an individual? A subject cannot be one of a class, and as an abstraction is an act of the mind the individual cannot be an abstraction. To say that consciousness is but a useless bye-product of biological process, non-essential to life, is to prove traitor to the very consciousness which begets the notion, which alone ushers us into a world of notions.

CHAPTER XVII : THE PROBLEM OF PERCEPTION

COMMONSENSE VIEW

SUPPOSING mind and matter to be as distinct from each other as heart could wish and to be equally real entities, the problem of knowledge becomes invested with an interest and a mystery altogether its own. How is matter apprehended by the mind? In other words, how am I able to perceive the tree out there? There are two features in my perception, both peculiar and paradoxical. I see the tree and I see it at a distance outside of me. Now, ordinarily my feelings arise, develop and disappear in myself. I do not locate them outside, and rightly so, since they belong to my inner psychic life. But I treat my sensations differently. A sensation of red, of green, or of sound, I trace to a source outside of me. Still I am not surprised. It looks perfectly natural that some objects should be near and others remote, while still others like the heavenly bodies are absolutely and eternally unapproachable. A moment's thought would reveal the contradiction in which our daily beliefs are involved. That I see is an experience of the mind. How can it put me in connection with a something alien to me? How do I accomplish this, my flight from myself to another being? The eyes do not start out of their sockets, neither does the tree penetrate my pupil. Light indeed is in this process taken to be the indispensable medium. But the perception of light itself presents the same problem. How do we perceive light as spreading around us and outside? We may, however, pass over this initial difficulty. Let us proceed to the next step in the explanation. The light rays issuing from the tree impinge on my retina leading to consequent changes in the rods and cones. But this does not form part of my conscious experience. Then the optic nerve which connects the eye with the brain communicates to the brain the stimulus it receives. Here the physiologist stops. Observe, the whole process takes place silently and I am quite unaware of it. What really draws my attention is the tree standing out in all its individuality and freshness of life. The interval between action in the brain and my perception of the object can never be bridged. Nor can the two be identified, as they are

incommensurable quantities. Yet, it is too common a miracle performed by my sense and mind. The difficulty arises in this way. I am to myself more a psychic than a physiological being. My experience is the sum of my feelings and sensations, and the tree as an independent object cannot be reduced to the latter terms. The percept known as the tree can stand only for a set of feelings and sensations in me. I cannot jump out of myself to know an alien. In the next place, the statement of the problem itself is not free from confusion. How do I perceive the tree? Why, here the tree is not the object independently of me, of which I can know nothing, but is obviously the percept which my brain sets up before me. Besides, how can I see my own eye or brain? I believe in their existence from statements of others and from inferences which, though practically valid, are far from scientifically unimpugnable. This problem of epistemology has exercised the minds of all great thinkers, and though they were convinced of its insolubility this did not prevent them from taking up dogmatic positions in accord with their individual bent. 'I see the tree itself,' says the realist, for 'I believe that the world is not an illusion nor my creation. I am not aware of having created a tree nor can I create one if I will. I merely see what is out there and it must be a reality'. Nobody would quarrel with such a man, but the philosophic query is not answered by presumptions. On account of the difficulties inherent in the subject no satisfactory explanation is possible. To Vedanta, however, which posits one changeless Reality the appearance of the waking world is no more wonderful than that of the dream-world. As each is a manifestation of the Absolute in its active aspect—*Maya*—the subject and the object, as creations out of the flesh of reality itself, are intimately related to each other. The succession of feelings and sensations in the subject is accompanied by a corresponding change in the external world which, without the comprehending subject to which it is opposed, is bereft of meaning or significance. Our dream-perception proves the futility of our attempts to explain waking perception as the reaction between the mind and an alien object. Two aliens cannot cognise each other, and in spite of our strong prepossession the notion of duality must be immolated on the altar of truth.

The reasoning of the common man is funny. "The world is real because it appears. How can an unreal thing appear?" Again, he naively changes his argument unconscious of the change and asserts, "The world appears because it is real". How can an unreal thing appear? Whether the reality of the world is the cause of its appearance or its appearance the cause of its reality is

not made clear. Taken together, the two judgments would imply that reality and appearance are eternal concomitants. This, however, is falsified by experience, since there are hallucinations which are hollow visions and since the self which is the fundamental reality does not appear. Driven out of this stronghold, the realist in his last gasp, clutches at solipsism and hurls that as a missile on the idealist. If the world is unreal then you are alone real, a doctrine worthy of only a mad man. Besides, how silly is it to say that you alone exist? First, whom do you wish to convince of the truth? If you mean to convert others to your views, you must then confess that they exist. Thus your very behaviour betrays you. How can it be a truth which does not bear the stamp of universality on it, and where is room for universality when the single subject abolishes the manifold as unreal?

Objections like these may be multiplied unlimitedly against the solipsist, but that will not secure the position of the realist. The charge of solipsism cannot be made against Vedanta. Solipsism presupposes the survival of the 'I' after the world has been disposed of, which is truly ridiculous. A man who believes himself to be the only reality has nothing to do with the other individuals who for him are unreal phantoms. But a Vedantin denies plurality not from the individual but from the absolute point of view in which both subject and object are dissolved. Only, in so denying, he at the same time remains at the empirical level which justifies his inculcating the doctrine on others. From the higher level he neither affirms nor denies. The simultaneity of the two positions is neither impossible nor self-contradictory. Pure Consciousness is immanent in all the states though unaffected by them and free. (cf. Chapter III)

INTELLECT AND ERROR

The part played by the understanding or the intellect in reacting upon the stimulus supplied by the sense of sight or the optic nerve is so subtle that it passes without arousing suspicion, but in truth the intellect is far from being a mere mirror that people take it to be. In fact, it has to do a great deal of active work before the world can assume the magical shape in which it stands before us. As already said the eye or the particular sense performs no doubt its preliminary function, but if the process of perception stopped there, there would be no vision. It is the intellect that creates an orderly and beautiful world of individuals taking their respective places and appearing in their regular turns in it—a cosmos in short. It is able to do this by virtue of its power to

interpret the different reactions of the senses and to produce as the result a picture to the formation of which each sense has contributed its own proper share. It is like the manager of an office who has to issue bulletins on important matters every moment, to furnish the eager soul with particulars of the world which is the source of its sustenance and enjoyment. The senses are, as it were, the five messengers who wander freely over the different regions assigned to them and make their report, each independently of the rest. It is the intellect that sorts, unifies and what is more exercises a censoring privilege. When, for instance, each sense has something peculiar to say about a mango—relating to its colour, smell, taste and touch, and when owing to distance, only the eye can take notice of it while the other senses cannot act, the intellect, whose duty it is to report of definite individuals, takes the liberty of finishing the portrait and we then perceive the fruit known as the mango with taste and smell already associated with it in advance, of whose existence we are perfectly sure. Our vision is mostly not pure vision but includes by unconscious assumption the characters more properly falling within the range of the other senses. A goes to a shop where he sees a number of bunches of bananas hung up for sale. His attention is drawn to one of them, which is the finest looking. But he learns that it is only an artificial bunch, mere clay and paint. He then chooses one from the rest which, however, are all real. Now it is clear in this case of mistake that there is no abnormal procedure on the part of the man's eye, no defect in vision. He sees the artificial bunch quite as well as the real ones with which it was mixed up. The skill of the artist gives the particular bunch the genuine look, and the sense of sight of the purchaser is deceived. Here we can easily detect the trick of the mind. On the materials furnished by the eye—mere nervous stimuli—the mind creates the picture, supplementing the report of the eye with such reports of its own, though strictly falling within the provinces of the other senses, as consorted with the former in the previous experiences. If I see a figure, a particular head-dress and gait from a distance, I take it to be that of a man I know. Here the two marks are enough for the mind to go upon and complete the picture as that of an acquaintance of mine. In most cases the supplementary work of the mind which arrogates to itself the privilege of filling in the items relating to the other senses without consulting them—like Clive's forging Watson's signature—is confirmed by later experience. In a few cases, however, the mind is too hasty and presumptuous and its bulletins become not simply unreliable but positively untrue. Thus arises mistaken perception. Vedanta

seizes upon this instance of the infidelity of the mind to the fact of life and tears off the mask from the self-creative intellect. But as we are Reality and unreality does not exist, every experience for the moment comes with the stamp of Reality on it, for unreality cannot simply be conceived. Even in judgments in which the subject is a non-entity our nature foists temporary reality upon it before making a predication about it, as when we say, the mirage is an illusion. Similarly, when it is claimed that every appearance requires a real substance for its basis we already treat appearance as a kind of reality. Otherwise we can make no statement concerning it. Hence when Vedanta declares that the whole world is but an appearance people still question, "well, but what is the cause of the appearance?" Evidently, "appearance" is here unconsciously advanced to the rank of reality.

Moreover, I can never see the whole of anything. Of for instance, the chair before me, I can take only partial views from various positions, but no view is by itself entire. Yet, I never imagine that I see only a part. My impression is that of the whole chair. This would be impossible if the mind guided by previous experience did not create the whole picture by supplementing the materials furnished by the eye by fancied ones in harmony with them and with the laws of perspective. Thus when I perceive a chair the percept is only a creation of the mind. It may be urged that even the mind cannot create unless with materials supplied by an external agent. Perception being an effect must presuppose a cause and we must pass beyond the senses to locate it. This indeed is another instinct of our nature. We never behold an act or an event but we regard it as an effect and try to connect it with a prior event as its cause. But causation being limited to the sphere of percepts our endeavour to soar beyond it is doomed to fail. Our waking perceptions are as much the creations of our intellect as our dream-perceptions. In both cases it is the Pure Consciousness that in its active aspect creates by manifesting itself as the object, to itself as the subject. As has already been observed, every state or expression of Reality appears as the present, is felt to be waking and to be the only Reality contrasted with which the immediately preceding state lapses into dream which is now stultified. The intellect acts as the servant of Pure Consciousness.

In every act of perception, right as well as wrong, the mind goes on ceaselessly supplementing what is actually presented by what might be presented in order to create a full picture of the object. Whenever the subsequent experience

discloses an error the intellect just stops to acknowledge it, but is not deterred thereby from continuing with undiminished self-confidence to supply as ever the ellipses in every instance. Its presumptuous haste often leads it into ludicrous pitfalls specially when a sense is handicapped, or when the mind has to combine the report of one sense with a probable report from the others. It then creates a snake out of a rope or takes an artificial bunch of bananas —mere clay and colour—for a natural one. In the former case insufficiency of light prevented the eye from supplying the true materials, but the mind with a haste which is incurable created a snake on the instant and issued its bulletin—" a snake, a snake ". Of course, in fuller light it discovers its mistake and still unabashed issues a later bulletin, " no, no, it is only a rope ". On both the occasions the mind's affirmation and self-confidence are imperturbable, and this is right, for the mind as the manisfestation of reality, whose handmaid it is, cannot experience untruth as an immediacy. Truth is reality and reality is truth, as Gentile says. The mind discovers the untruth only when the experience is past, while every present experience must both be true and real. Ordinarily, the creative act of the mind in perception lands it in no difficulties, as the elements presented and supplemented form an individual whole, which is not contradicted by subsequent experience. But in the case of optical illusions the intellect misguided by sense is completely floundered as when it mistakes a rope for a snake or a lacquer work for a real fruit. Thus it is placed beyond a doubt that the picture of the world presented to us at this moment is purely and entirely the creation of the mind as a manifestation of Pure Consciousness. We, of course, torture ourselves with the problem. "If my mind created the world, why cannot I create a grass blade ?" This presumes that all that the mind does is done through our volitions and ignores the deeper fact that the fundamental processes of the mind and of nature are alike guided by a power which is revealed by life as our own self. But the principles of its activity being those of its manifestation are beyond our time-bound intellect and understanding. It is tantamount to the same thing whether we say that P.C. creates both subject and object, or that Pure Consciousness as mind creates its own object; for, apart from Pure Consciousness the mind can create nothing and the ego is impotent. The error is only for the ego. It is meaningless for Pure Consciousness.

HINDU LOGIC AND PSYCHOLOGY

We may now briefly refer to the Indian epistomology. According to the logician the process of perception is as follows : The self unites with mind, the mind with sense and the last with the object. Then perception arises. It must be borne in mind that the Hindu psychology looks upon the mind and the self as two distinct entities. The westerners regard the mind as the central reality giving birth to the notions of all the rest including that of the self, and therefore that the self is simply the subject or the mind, and they are identical. A few words may be helpful in understanding the Hindu idea of mind. It is conceived as a material structure, subtler than air, imponderable, indestructible, gathering energy from desire and losing it by detachment, but never destroyed except by Knowledge. It is not consciousness but its instrument, and like the objective world is a creation of Pure Consciousness. Consciousness identifying itself with the various features of mind appears to feel, will and cognise. But even the willing is ultimately illusive and P. C. is utterly unaffected and absolutely pure; for P. C. and the empirical consciousness cannot be as Subject conjoined with anything else such as the mind. It maintains its purity in sleep every day. The mind, therefore, being a creation must disappear when enlightenment dawns. Feeling, volition and cognition can be objectified only because they are referred to a mind other than consciousness. The etheric waves can also reasonably affect the mind and *Yogic* and spiritual powers such as clairvoyance and clairaudience are rendered possible only by the circumstance that the mind is material. The Hindu idea of the self as derived from intuition, from a study of dream and waking, is that it is pure existence, devoid of activity and endowed with eternal life. Thus, the self is the irreducible subject-element in man, the internal witness. It assumes the part of the intellect when we impose the activities of the latter upon it. In reality the self neither cogitates, nor wills nor feels. Its essence is felicity. *Karma*, the offspring of ignorance, brings it into bondage, and the self as the ego goes through pain and suffering till it wakes and recognises its own nature as pure reality or consciousness. Then the bonds break and fall and the ego obtains salvation and release. The mind and the senses as well as the physical body are the walls of the soul's prison, and the soul is bound up with them during its pilgrimage through births and deaths. But even in empirical life the self may temporarily detach itself from these binding appendages as in deep

sleep or it may just be connected with the mind alone as in dream or emerge into the outermost sphere to unite with the mind, the senses and the objects.

To proceed with to the Logician's view: When through the mind and the senses the ego comes into contact with the object, perception arises. But it is not clear at which end or where the activity relating to perception starts. If the self is the first to act it must act without a stimulus from outside which would make it capricious. On the other hand, the object cannot be conceived as capable by its action of thrusting itself upon the notice of the self except through the media, *viz.*, the senses and the mind. But if an object can do that then it would be impossible to determine which of the objects spread around is to succeed in engaging the attention of the soul since all of them are equally competent for the purpose. In other words, attention being selective in its nature must proceed only from the self. But evidently the self is to act without a stimulus. A self which is blind by itself is incompetent to select. It would also be doubtful as to how objects can appear individually distinct where all would simultaneously knock at the gate for admission. The result would be mere chaos. The activity of the mind or the senses, in the next place, without that of the ego would be fruitless, as perception has meaning only in relation to a self. Hence this theory cannot hold water. Besides, as the theory has to assume the contact between the senses and the object, which can never be brought within the pale of human experience, the problem of perception is and must remain for ever insoluble.

Scholastic Vedanta has an explanation of its own. The one reality is supposed to split itself into three kinds of consciousness, the subject, the object and the intellect. When the first and the second combine cognition of an object arises, *e. g.*, This is a chair. When the first and the third become one, self-reflective perception arises, *e. g.*, I see a chair. But this does not explain why reality is split up, and how the conjunction of the first and the second should lead to perception. In the case of both the above schools the real problem, *viz.*, how an object which is by its nature opposed to the subject should be comprehended by it in all its individual characteristics receives no solution. In fact, theories of the kind we have noted assume a real antagonism between matter and mind though how it is overcome in perception is left unexplained.

In perception do the senses and the optic nerve perform any function? What is it and how is it made apparent in the result, *viz.*, the tree perceived? If the whole picture is due to the opera-

tion of the mind then the nerve and the senses prove useless. But if they are indispensable then we have to apportion their share in the formation of the total image. Again, at the stimulation of the sense nerves the brain creates the external world which is the same as saying that the will by means of its organ, the sense, creates the world which is its store of enjoyment. In that case where is room for a plurality of wills or worlds? If the space in which I see objects lie, is my private space, how can I perceive the space of physical science and how far do they coincide? Where do they separate? As James asks, does the mind get at the object or the object get into the mind? Neither the primary nor the secondary qualities, nor the real object behind them can ever be grasped by the mind. For remember its position. It stands at the end of a series of stockades, one behind the other, *viz.*, the sensory nerves, and the brain. Now the external object may be conceived to be brought into contact with the eye by means of light waves. The eye is the outermost entrenchment, behind it connected by the optic nerve is the brain and behind the brain, of which it seems to be altogether unaware, is the mind. Does the mind get a direct knowledge of the tree while it externally keeps itself behind two intermediaries? Are not the latter likely to have their share in the depiction of the object? Besides, does nature employ this as the surest method of knowing an alien thing correctly? Does it not look preposterous that the soul to have a just notion of the external world should eternally depend upon the mind—which is perhaps only an exhalation of the brain and which hides itself in its quarters at a distance of three removes from the world? The senses and the brain, which are comparatively nearer the object, are dumb and inarticulate and the mind, which is certainly a different kind of entity being the subject, somehow receives its cue from those mutes. What can be more incredible? No scientific explantion is possible of perception so long as the world and the mind, the subject and the object are held to be distinct and independent. This decision is final as the mind cannot outstrip its own bounds. But pluralists like James will not accept this dictum. Their position is naturally fertile in contradictions and in creation of enigmas. And James heaps up a number of philosophic problems to be tackled by posterity. Vedanta can be confidently recommended as the *sal volatile* for all such wilful wanderings of the intellect.

DREAM-ANALOGY AND PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

If we could discover a principle of perception that might explain waking life we should find the same applicable to dream-

perception also. But dream-life supplies no real stimuli from outside and the empirical explanation given by psycho-analysis assumes the persistence of latent impressions of waking as the internal stimuli to be responsible for dream-creations. But the real difficulty is shelved thereby, not solved. The question is, how are the images, the objects of dreams, formed? Surely there are no real objects outside of the dreamer from which light waves might proceed to his eye and so on. The stimuli, if at all, must be in him and in reacting to them the dreamer's mind should instantaneously create the objects, as well as the space and time-bound world in which they are placed. How quick are its creations is realised by everyone who lingers in bed during the small hours of the morning. The variety of scenes and the rapid succession of events far surpass the arrangements possible in a theatre. The novelty and the grotesque combinations are simply unthinkable. It may be observed also that the unnaturalness of theatrical representations are tolerated because no one believes in them, but the impossibilities of dream occurrences and presentations are absolutely coercive and ride roughshod over our reason and judgment. The triumph of the dream-spirit is complete. We assent to all that she dictates, we believe in all her masquerades and we see through the dissimulations only after we wake.

Modern psychology has been making rapid advance in Europe. It has been felt by scientists that the realm of nature is not confined to the physical world which is open to perception, but that it spreads over other parts of life, most notably sleep and dream. Men often behave in mysterious ways, and suffer from ills which cannot all be traced to palpable causes operating from outside. Mental diseases are in this way unintelligible, unless we gain an insight into the inner life of the patient, his feelings and volitions both conscious and unconscious. After a good deal of observation and reflexion, it has been ascertained that desires when they are strong but repressed, find expression in dreams, and Psycho-analysis is a great aid in discovering the source of a malady. A dream is simply the concretisation of desires repressed. This theory, however, has not been universally accepted, and other speculations have been put forward which appear better to harmonize with experience.

While the intellectual movement in this direction must be heartily welcomed, we cannot look forward to results of a philosophical value by any amount of research of this kind. For, the primary motive is narrow in scope and is founded in the delusion

that waking is the premier reality to which the other states should be subordinated to have a meaning. This is neither fair nor true. It is possible that such a study may force us to recast our psychological conceptions, and lead to the discovery of remedies hitherto untried or unknown. But we shall all the more become rooted in the common error that waking experience overshadows all.

To interpret dreams in the language of the waking life, the mind is assumed to be of a subtle material structure like any natural object with which waking experience familiarizes us and is conceived to be made up of two chambers, one occupied by consciousness and the other by the unconscious. It is confessed that the spatial idea does not conform to the true nature of mind, but it is pleaded notwithstanding that the conception is of a highly practical utility since it enables us to take a step forward in understanding—life, especially in the realm of the unconscious. Hitherto dreams were the despair of psychologists, and certain maladies of the mind that of medical science. But, psycho-analysis has illuminated the gloom, and the modern spatial theory of the Mind has a high working-value. Of the innumerable feelings that are awakened in us in our waking experience, of the countless sensations produced in waking life, some are consciously held in the closet of the memory, while the others, owing to the lower degree of interest excited by them, are pushed into the back chamber, the region of the unconscious where some of them sink to the bottom or are thrust into a dark corner, and irrecoverably lost for all time. Some others, however, keep near the door, and wait for occasions which might readmit them to the front chamber, the chamber of conscious life. When fresh stimuli occur, these past impressions enter the region of consciousness and react to them. The stimuli may proceed either from the external world, or from the internal nervous system. Thus our desires formed in waking, if repressed, retire into the unconscious, and during sleep break out in the dramatic form characteristic of dreams. Feelings and sensations assume concrete shape which depend on the waking history of the man; a hint, a suggestion is enough to dress them up in forms elected by them, though as these dream-representations are of a symbolic nature, their interpretation demands close study and careful observation. When the feelings and desires that give rise to the dream-perceptions, are correctly ascertained, a fresh light is thrown on the inner life of the man, which will enable us to tackle his mental maladies with greater certainty of success. Thus the bounds of rational science will have been greatly extended, and the chasm between waking and dream bridged up. European psychology to which mind is the antithesis of matter, and

comprehends indifferently consciousness, soul, spirit, the ego, the self, the subject and even God, in fact, everything that does not occupy space or is not known by perception, must feel some qualms of conscience when it boldly proceeds to deal with the mind capriciously as if it were a thing of the same kind as matter which it cognizes as its own object. But scientists are not troubled by such considerations as may scare the logician or the philosopher, since their sole aim is to obtain practical results, with whatever violence to consistency.

While we are free to acknowledge the practical good that this crude conception offered to us under the name of psychology, may do to suffering humanity, we cannot rest satisfied with the unsettling of our notions of mind which that conception would necessarily imply. Besides, the theory is inadequate. In the first place, it cannot be claimed that all dreams are the expression of repressed desires, and that every man whether he is healthy or sick experiences dreams only because of such desires. In the next place, life in her unimaginable facility to produce forms, construct plots, and create incidents, shows a will and a power which baffle theories and override speculations. Some persons do not know when their sleep was dreamless, and if they slept for 10 hours, they still had dreams without order or cessation. A man obliged to sit up in a railway carriage barely shuts his eyes when he directly opens them with the soothing memory of a flitting dream. In the early hours of the morning, dreams are grotesque, endless, orderless and wild. If only the sick were visited by dreams, the theory might be plausible. But some of the pleasures of life the healthiest of us owe to the fairy scenes of dreams. If one's dreams were stamped with a particular character, and they were uniform in their occurrence we might in such instances raise them to the rank of waking phenomena, give them a higher standing than they can usually claim, and by methodical study endeavour to unveil their nature. But this is hardly to be expected. Dreams laugh at the mandates of scientific reason and will not pander to the convenience of theories.

Again, a dream is not recognised as such while it lasts. The scientist knows at the time of his observation what he is observing. This elementary condition of studying phenomena, cannot be secured in the case of a dream. The latter is known to be such only after it is past, and it must be so, so long as a dream is a dream. For what is it but that which makes us believe it to be waking and undeceives us only after its own disappearance, when

it is no longer there for our scrutiny? Hence we cannot study it with that care and confidence that we can bring with us to the study of every waking phenomenon. Besides, supposing we know our present feelings or sensations, can we predict the kind of dream we are to have the next time we go to sleep? Dreams arbitrarily convey their meaning, sometimes in a direct, sometimes in a tortuous, often in a contrary manner. In some instances, you simply hear words or see dumb flitting shadows. How a feeling is likely to be drest up in a dream it is impossible to foretell.

Nature like a consummate magician to whom nothing is impossible, gently puts the extinguisher on the light of our waking consciousness before she ushers us into the region lit up by dream-consciousness. We never know when that light is dull or dazzling, we never suspect our altered fate. We are in the hands of a mistress who can dispose of our life and judgment in any fantastical way she chooses to which the shrewdest, smartest intellect, that of a Newton or an Edison must equally submit with the added humiliation of realising their helplessness only after the foe has vanished. Are we left alone at least after we wake? Is our memory of dream clear and unadulterated by foreign elements? Who can, when he recollects a dream, allow for his rationalizing instinct, and his waking prejudices, and relate it in its actual purity? Or what reagents has the scientist by which to detect the exotic elements unconsciously mixed up by the patient when he relates his past dream? Further, of the multitude of dreams experienced in a night the earlier ones will have become too faded to be recalled and the later ones will stand out too prominent in memory. How is a man to select from them presented in such variety, number and contrast, just that one or those ones that typically embody his feelings or sensations? What shall be the principle of selection? We must assume the feeling which we are here to infer. The memory of the patient has to perform the task. Now remembering the waywardness of memory on the one hand, and the incompetence of the patient for a dispassioned self-scrutiny, the results we arrive at should be scientifically of little worth. Then arise the difficulties of interpretation. The dreams adopt a language of their own which they vary at pleasure and the pictures and events through which they communicate their meaning are neither strung on a uniform principle of a symbolism, nor always make a direct intimation. As to the kind of stimuli, that might be at work during sleep, they must relate to every department of physiological and psychic life, which must make a discrimination simply impossible. There are physiological dreams reflecting the

condition and the activities of the stomach, the heart, the lungs, the liver, and the intestines. There are others reacting to our sensory nerves, emotions, and incipient volitions—the psychic set. There are prophetic dreams which exhibit in the soul the undoubted powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience, at a germinal or at a developed stage. Time and space seem to present no obstacles to the perceptions and visions of the spirit. Then there are the dreams of the musing philosopher, of the imaginative poet, or the inventive genius; the dreams of the pious devotee, and of the condemned criminal; of virtue, and those of avarice and of intoxication, of poverty, of affliction, of tyranny, and of ambition.

The difficulties to be encountered by psycho-analysis are thus insuperable; and to whatever extent it may succeed, it cannot have a scientific value nor claim precision nor trustworthiness. At best it may point to a new direction of life in which human interests lie, but to follow in the direction with any certain hopes of obtaining definite results does not seem to be within human power or probability. It must also be remembered that much of the cure that is claimed to be effected by psycho-analysis is easily attributable to the power of suggestion which is known to be a potent actor in influencing human feelings and action. The psycho-analyst, or the doctor treating a patient, himself starts with a certain belief suggested to him, and he communicates the suggestion consciously or unconsciously to his patient. The effects depend on the nature of the patient, the condition of his nerves and brain, his susceptibility, faith, etc. Hence this kind of study of dreams cannot advance the cause of philosophy, or even contribute to any material extent to the understanding of the mystery of life; for the common vice of subordinating the dream state to the waking, still accompanies psycho-analysis like a shadow and narrows its scope and darkens its vision. For a study of dream to acquire a philosophical value, every idea of its being a mere adjunct to waking life, or of exploiting it for the benefit of another state must be once for all abandoned. Religious faith and superstition can put up equal or superior pretensions to even more marvellous efficacy in curing mental disorders.

The causal instinct in us forces us to assume that there must be something in order that it may be perceived. This nevertheless is belied in dream, barring latent impressions acting as stimuli. Even the psychists cannot affirm the existence of real objects in dream, and if nature's behaviour has to be uniform the images of perception must be, in waking as in dream, instantaneous projections of the mind, veritable snapshots. An unbroken series of them

each overlapping the rest gives us a notion of their persistence or duration, thus building up an external world whose mysterious appearance has been a vexatious problem with all thinkers. In other words, perception in waking is accounted for by the assumption of stimuli external to the senses. In dream, in which there is no real external world, this kind of accounting for perception will not do. An internal stimulus therefore is taken for granted to explain dream-perception. Since, however, the effects are identical in both the states and the stimuli cannot be otherwise directly experienced there is no meaning in making them external in the one case and internal in the other. That is to say, the stimuli are a mere phantasy.

KANT ON SPACE, TIME AND CAUSATION

As men in general are prepossessed in favour of the world's reality the question of perception receives scant attention; but, for that very reason, if for no other, a fearless seeker after truth should make the most careful scrutiny into the nature of knowledge. It is now two hundred years nearly since Kant announced to the astounded world his discovery of the forms of thought, which is destined to be classed with the highest of the kind conducive to promote the spiritual interests of man. Except in Vedantic works of the Hindus there is no evidence to prove that men had even suspected the part played by time and space in giving to the world the form that it bears.

Perception. The mind is like a telephone exchange. It works up the sensations into percepts. But if the sensations are my own and a percept is the work of my mind what is there outside of the mind? Objects are complexes of sight and touch. Space and time are the network supplied by the mind. Other men are complexes of touch, sight, sound, etc., regarded as centres of individuality but still *within* one's mind. If matter is distinct from mind the sensations mediate between them. If the mind is the all, then the sensations are the extreme fringe of reality. In the former case perception is a standing riddle. Sleep and dream do not reach us through sensations. They come from a deeper source within ourselves, not from memory, which is fed by previous sensations of waking, but from intuition which is the deepest part of our life. As regards plurality of minds, except in an empirical sense adequate proof is altogether wanting. When I speak to another I am simply speaking to myself and though I may be hotly discussing with an uncompromising antagonist, I have not travelled from myself because even difference in

views implies a fundamental identity of nature, and my opponent must understand me before he disputes with me. And the understanding must be identically the same on the part of both as otherwise the opposition is meaningless (Gentile). That is to say, there cannot be two separate minds, as in that case the correspondence between them which is radical cannot be explained. Two clocks work on the same principle because the mind that conceived it was one. Compare one's experience of other minds in dream. Hence all existence is one reality overflowing individuality, movement, origination and dissolution. If we lay aside this comprehensive view even for a moment, we take Reality to pieces which then become abstractions, and we find ourselves in a struggle with inimical forces without end.

Kant's proofs of the *a priori* nature of Time, Space and Causation are summarised below for the convenience of the readers. They are mentioned in the order of the letters that make up the mnemonic words " I can Ma ".

I or Infinity. Space and time we conceive as infinite though we have no experience of their infinity. Neither can they be conceived as bounded, for the bounds or limits must again be space or time. Hence these are *a priori* forms of thought.

C or Continuity. Perception can supply only the points or minute divisions of an object corresponding to the sensations. It cannot also provide the ground on which the points or divisions are located. Such ground is furnished by the mind in the shape of time or space. In other words, every object can be imagined to consist of innumerable particles each of which stimulates a sensation, but cannot be regarded as also furnishing a basis for all the sensations. Hence it is the mind that goes out to receive the sensations in a framework of its own consisting of time and space, and projects the picture.

A or Adhesion. Suppose a house that you know has been demolished. In thinking of the event we can only imagine the house to be destroyed. You cannot think away the space it occupied. That is to say, even after the image of the house had been removed from the mind, the space occupied by it would still adhere to your mind and cannot be thought away. This is so because space is an element of thought and not of the external world. Similarly you cannot think away the time during which the house stood.

N or Necessity. External occurrences are of a contingent nature. Events may occur in one way or another or may not occur

at all. A flower, for instance, may be red or white or there may not be a flower, but there is no flower which does not occupy space and there can be no occurrence that does not occupy time. The elements of necessity must therefore belong to thought, for an object fills space not because we can prove that no object can fail to do so, but because we cannot think or conceive of any that refuses to obey the rule. If it has no position in space, why then, it is nowhere.

M or Mathematics. The truth of Arithmetic and Geometry are synthetical judgments not derived from experience, for no experience can prove that 5 plus 3 is 8, but nothing can shake our conviction of its truth, as any other relation is unthinkable. The properties of a triangle follow from its very definition, and are universal truths though we cannot have experience of every instance of a triangle available in the world.

A or Antecession. Space and time as conditions of experience precede it. We cannot start at any moment to perceive an external world without presuming time and space as the prii of the experience. (*Vide* Paul Deussen's *Elements of Metaphysics.*)

The discovery of the profound truth that time and space as well as causality are simply forms of thought and have no independent existence, entitles Kant so richly endowed with metaphysical intuitions to be ranked with the greatest of sages. Later European thinkers, however, though they profess formal admiration for his genius have rarely allowed their speculation to follow the new direction pointed out by him, with the exception of Schopenhauer and his disciple Paul Deussen. How can transcendental Reality be conceived in terms of time and space, and without the two latter how can plurality be conceived to-exist? For, it presupposes co-existence in space or succession in time. Apart from these it is impossible to talk of number, divisibility or multiplicity. The external world is therefore but the will embodied—a fabric of sensations woven by the mind with time and space as warp and woof. What are qualities but universal concepts which again demand a plurality of objects from which they could spring? Change and movement are but the empirical index of the unchecked course of feelings, desires and implicit volitions characterising psychic life—life of Pure Consciousness as an active principle of creation and self-realisation. Even what are called unconscious cerebrations must be regarded as the anticipative activity of P. C. in the shape of the latent desires and tendencies of the individual, while other inscrutable processes of its willing, of *Maya*, result in the infinite cosmos spread around us. Vedanta discloses Reality and declares

that the question as to how it produces the world of multiplicity is beyond our comprehension as it is a case of self-manifestation similar to dream-creation. If Kant's logic were pushed to its legitimate issues it must land the enquirer in Vedanta as in the case of Schopenhauer and Deussen.

THE VEDANTIC VIEW

Since Kant was the first to prove scientifically the *a priori* nature of time and space we may reasonably wonder how the truth had already come to be recognised and built upon by the Vedic seers, more than two or three thousand years earlier. The fact is that India has been a fertile field of deep and lucid intuitions which lead to the immediate vision of reality, and the precious truths so gathered must in their nature be final and infallible. The three-states-view is the highest and the most comprehensive vouchsafed to man, unattempted by other thinkers and will take very long to receive that appreciation that it deserves. Besides how can common minds rise to the height of the conception that time and space are no objective realities? The method of Vedanta is both simple and clear. First there is no temporal or spatial connection between waking and sleep, for if there were then both should turn into a continuation of each other, and there would be only one state, *viz.*, the waking. But this is opposed to experience. Hence each state being independent of the rest, is a full representation of reality, as a balance left of reality can be located no where. Thirdly the highest reality is the P. C. of sleep, and whatever is not to be found in P. C. must be only of a contingent or empirical nature and not absolutely real.

Hence it necessarily follows that time, space, causality, change, duration, movement, appearance of things, occurrences of events are all but the empirical expression of life whose real nature as P. C. is beyond the understanding. The result of determining the nature of time as only empirical, confining its appearance to dream and waking—neither uniform nor predictable in the former, but operating with inexorable regularity in the latter—is simply incalculable. Our waking notions are so deeply tinged by time and space that we cannot think of any real sphere of action or enjoyment from which they are banished. Heaven and hell are ruled by them. God himself moves in space through time, creates, sustains and dissolves within their bounds. But as Huxley remarked what is there in the nature of consciousness that it should eternally wear these shackles? In some state not experienced by us consciousness might possibly be free from

them. Yes, in sleep there is consciousness emancipated from all bondage. Mr. Bradley believes that the perceptual flux, all that is known as nature, must undergo transmutation somehow in the Absolute which is free from incoherence and contradiction. But it is not clear whether he looks forward to a future state in which empirical things will melt into the Absolute or whether the Absolute has all along existed simultaneously with distinctions and difference. In the former case, we cannot see upon what basis his hopes are founded. In the latter case, the perceptual world must be a mere illusion. According to Vedanta the world of relations is real and objects within it react upon each other; but compared with the transcendental Reality, which it essentially is, it is as if it were not. Hence the reconciliation of contradictions is ever an accomplished fact, and yet ever seems due; for the two standpoints altogether differ. Lastly, progress is unendingly possible in the imperfect state which alone can admit of it, while from the higher point of view it is unmeaning. With time and space we dispose of causality also in the higher state of view, for causality presupposes time, presupposes antecedent and consequent; and when time is vanquished causality and change are annihilated. Whether such a state be desirable or not it is real. At the same time, it must not be confounded with a wearisome staticity which is intolerable even to think of. We have nothing to liken to it in phenomenal life where stagnation is decay, and sameness death. On the contrary, we have many evidences which place beyond all doubt that the state of release is happy beyond all comparison. Voices of the past, religious experiences, deep sleep, states of æsthetic and metaphysical contemplation—Philosophy which embraces within its purview entire life cannot afford to ignore these.

CHAPTER XVIII: ÆSTHETICS AND VEDANTA

BEAUTY AND BLISS

AS the all, the free, as truth and bliss, we chafe at restraint, exclusion, disability, falsehood and ugliness. Without reality the world reduces itself to nothing. Hence we cannot brook inertness, refractoriness, resistance, etc. Visual beauty gives delight by form and makes us rise above individuality. The joy of beauty is immediate and is due to the realising of oneness, transcending the subject and object. A sound, a figure, a scene might suddenly raise a thrill when we are in the non-willing mood. To the Vedantin, then, all life being reality and bliss, there is no ugliness. It is the individual view that meddles with the æsthetic enjoyment. Vedanta identifies bliss and beauty ultimately. In its eye beauty as the cause of delight is an empirical notion. Life is ever fresh. The Vedantin never looks for something new or novel because to him nothing wears the appearance of old. His joy cannot increase. Only those who find fruition inferior to anticipation can feel impatient or disappointed.

Pleasure satisfies temporary wants or cravings, either felt or unfelt, and pain reminds us of incapacity and bondage. The soul being of the realm of freedom frets at every restraint placed upon its action. It aims at self-rule and will not be satisfied with less. Happiness is more lasting than pleasure as it refers to the satisfaction with one's lot in life according to certain ideals. Both happiness and pleasure imply want overcome or supplied, and are an external view of life. Bliss inheres in reality and one cannot acquire it afresh or be dispossessed of it. Only ignorance has to be dispelled to realise it. The ego has grown strange to his own self and by identifying himself with several alien elements has forgotten his real nature. Beauty depends upon cultural advance as much as on the form of the external object. Intellectual and artistic beauty depends on cultural preparation. Natural beauty is more general as it appeals to the senses more than to the intellect. Even here a poet discovers a thousand beauties which escape common notice. In general, that is beautiful which has no reference to the wants of the organism. The stars, the sun and the

moon, the sea and the sky, the river and the wood delight without reference to a practical or humanistic view. The sight of a beautiful person produces immediate delight, for it is the form that attracts and is both incorporeal and beyond common individuality. In a sage, beauty delights without exciting fleshly desires. Sensual people do not stop at mere admiration. They have no self-control and are dragged down by selfish desires. When self-interest is absent, the whole face of nature is brimming with beauty. For beauty is but bliss externalised.

The ambition of the scientist to rifle the secrets of Nature proceeds from an impulse deep rooted in the absolute power, freedom and intelligence of the soul. We seek emancipation from fetters of all kind, and cannot rest till all obstacles are removed from the path to knowledge or happiness. As Schopenhauer observes, "æsthetic contemplation and the consequent delight are a temporary emancipation of the soul from embodiment from the penalties of willing or affirmation". It is a foretaste and a guarantee of final beatitude. Unlike the scientist, the Vedantin cannot wait till every corner of the Universe is explored by science. He seeks immediate freedom through the higher knowledge and one individual can combine in himself the nature of the scientist and the Vedantin at the same time. For there is no inconsistency.

God objectifies Himself to enjoy His own perfection and beauty. He then becomes the subject in us which is utterly innocent. But soon the ego takes its place and begins to will and plan separating itself from the object. While the subject merely sees, the ego wants, wills and separates. To indulge the ego with its likes and dislikes, its fancies and prejudices, is the source of all mischief. Vedanta converts all existence into blessedness, for all is Brahman, and Brahman is the highest joy. It does not, therefore, contemplate Beauty apart from Brahman. Herein we touch the bottom of the æsthetic feeling in man. Whatever exhibits the features of the higher Reality, freedom, power, life, infinity, mystery, is beautiful. Whatever on the other hand suggests helplessness, restraint, weakness, limitation and danger is ugly.

ÆSTHETIC CONTEMPLATION

The condition of æsthetic contemplation is not easy to define. Sense of individuality is necessary for perception but it must be pushed far into the background to enable one to appreciate beauty, for the intrusion of personal or selfish considerations must seriously affect the æsthetic judgment. As Schopenhauer says, the individual in æsthetic contemplation is lifted above the consciousness of

the subject-object relation. He sees a picture, or a statue, or a sylvan scene, and in admiring its beauty forgets time and space, and himself for a time. This forgetting of self or rising above it is both the condition and effect of æsthetic contemplation. In human society many circumstances help to elevate objects into beauty, or degrade them into ugliness. Ideas of fashion, of convention, prejudices, customs, beliefs, and authoritative regulations often determine what shall be regarded as pleasant or unpleasant, as agreeable or disagreeable.

In many cases our sentiments are dominated by anthropomorphism. Certain animals are looked upon as ugly, as they do not present the proportion of limbs that we witness in man. The monkey comes nearest to us in shape and hence challenges comparison with man to its disadvantage. On the contrary, birds are beautiful for the build of their body is on a different principle, and their power of free flight contributes to their being regarded as happy beings. The calf of a cow, a kid, a chicken is beautiful on account of their liveliness and innocence. But the beauty of a tiger or a cobra suffers from the terror it awakens. A calm contemplation of beauty is impossible when the man is palpitating with extreme fear. To Vedanta, however, all nature and life is resplendent with ineffable charms, for all is divine. Plurality and distinction do not interfere with this feeling, but considerations of the lower self in man is ruinous to it and extinguishes it. True piety and Vedantic insight overspread earth and heaven, with inexpressible loveliness to which common minds are utter strangers. Poetry, painting and music alike conduce to unfold the divinity in life, as action its ethical perfection.

Like subjective conditions there are some objective ones also that tend to create a sense of beauty and actively help men to rise to the æsthetic level. Delicate strains of music, as well as works of high imagination such as sculpture, architecture have this elevating effect. Hence temples, and religious observances are made attractive and impressive, by the provision of these artistic auxiliaries. Solitude, weird surroundings, expanse of water, groves, hill-tops, lift the soul and incline it to a meditation on the great problem of life. Beauty of external nature is an evidence of the blissfulness of that Reality whose sublime expression is the universe of soul and matter. It is a warning and a hope to feeble minds disposed to worldliness. But joy arising from a sight of beautiful things or the ecstasy of religious or *yogic* trances is contingent and temporary. It is not comparable to the joy of Knowledge for the latter leads to beatitude beyond the ravages of

time and circumstance. Mystic practices, and the cultivation of fine arts, may have intelligible interest for man, but they differ from the study of Vedanta, or the Science of Life, both in their aim and in their results. At best they are an assurance to us that the life of the Spirit is one of unbroken felicity.

As a well-known passage of the Brihad Aranyaka declares, *Atma*—or the Self is supremely lovable and therefore lovely. When the whole world is seen to be identical with the self, the attitude of the mind will not be one of indifference, but one of positive enjoyment. In fact, our most powerful craving for pleasures only manifests the irresistible force exercised by the self, in virtue of which man is prepared to go through fire and water to realise his ambition. His only fault consists in his ignorance of his higher self. Hegel, who explains Beauty as the manifestation of the Idea in things, is not able to account for the lovableness of Beauty or of the Idea in the same satisfactory manner as Vedanta. But Schopenhauer is more Vedantic: "We forget our own individuality with all its torment, because we are seduced by the beauty of the thing we look at to forget its individuality."

UPASANA OR MEDITATION: AUM

If a man attempts to fix his mind upon one object and prevents even the idea of time or space coming to be associated with it, his mind like any living organism, strives its utmost to force in some other notion and continues the struggle for some time, say about ten minutes. If the man relaxes in his vigilance, or is lacking in energy the mind triumphs and a series of different notions pass through and occupy the satisfied mind. But if the soul is more persistent and tenaciously clings to the one object or notion it has taken up, the mind becomes soon exhausted; and, disheartened, vanishes, unveiling thereby the inner majesty of the eternal Self. This is what is experienced as trance. It supplies the reason why the Hindus regard Mind as distinct from the Spirit. Vedanta in its psychic portion deals with the various methods of inducing the trance, as a guarantee to the beginner that Vedantic Truth is not merely intellectual, but is found to agree with the deepest aspects of Life and Experience. These methods are known as *Upasanas*. They are again of three varieties. The practitioner may fix his attention on specific parts of his head, such as (1) the spot between the eyebrows (2) the tip of the nose (3) the right eye (4) the uvula (5) the nether part of the tongue (6) the spinal column (7) the crown of the head, etc. This is *Adhyatmika Vidya*; or he may meditate upon any

physical object such as the *Linga*, the *Salagrama*, or an idol installed in a temple. This is *Adhibhautika*; or lastly, he may contemplate on the Sun, the Moon, or any *Vedic* God, or on a mere name or *Aum*. This is *Adhidaivika*.

The meditation on *Aum* is the highest of all, and deserves special mention. As the Universe of Life is viewed in four aspects; the waking, the dream, sleep and *Turya*, so the syllable *Aum* is broken up into four parts, three audible and one inaudible:

A symbolises Waking.
U symbolises Dream.
M symbolises Sleep.
AUM (as a whole or part) *Turya*.

Turya is not something added to the three states but is each state minus its appearance or *Mayic* element. For *Turya* is *Brahman*, Indivisible and Immanent. This is the highest *Upasana* enjoined on ascetics, though, Knowledge when it springs up puts an end to the need of meditation as a means. Those that stigmatise Hinduism as idolatry have not taken pains to understand the principle of Hindu *Upasana* or worship. That principle is to discipline the mind, and make it acquire the power of meditating on subtlest truths. The practician consciously looks upon the object before him as something which he has never seen, or which he can only imagine. A *Salagrama* is, for the time being, regarded as Vishnu. The notion of Vishnu, is, of course, obtained from scriptural descriptions. If he overcomes the sensory report that it is only a black stone and if he actually by power of fancy or imagination sees, in its place, the figure created by his mind, his *Upasana* is supposed to have succeeded. He is then expected to gain spiritual powers of whatever kind he chooses. Very often, instead of an actual perversion of vision, the *Upasaka* may meet with the God of his meditation in his dream, and even this is considered to be a sign of the devotee's success in securing divine grace. Instances of spiritual powers acquired in this way are not rare.

The simplest effect of *Upasana* is to help the devotee's soul-complex to detach itself from the physical body either by musing on distant objects, or by looking upon the body as an object of thought. By a long course of practice of this kind, the dry matter-of-fact temperament of the student gives place to the power of conceiving a world which absorbs the perceptual in itself, and he becomes capable of taking in impressions of spiritual life and truth. Without this preliminary the teaching of Vedanta in many cases, becomes utterly fruitless. Baths, services, pilgrimages, prostrations, wor-

ship, gifts to the poor, fasts, vigils are all classed among processes of true devotion.

Those that realise the significance of the syllable, (word or symbol) *Aum* will alone be able to appreciate the enormous part it has played in moulding the religious and philosophical views of Hindus. A boy in his eighth year is initiated into the secret of *Aum* (pron. like home, with silent h). It is prefixed and affixed to the *Gayatri* or the common prayer. Every ritual, every *vedic* recitation, begins and ends with the utterance of *Aum*. The ascetic repeats it three thousand times, morning and evening. It is prayer, meditation and truth combined. It is believed to purify the mind and to purify life. The Tantriks, the Yogins, the Ritualists, and the Vedantins all equally rely on it as the means of salvation. It is the Trimurtis, Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Preserver) and Rudra (Destroyer). It is the *Logos*, the word, the sound from which evolve names and forms. The Universe is but eternal movement, vibration, emitting audible and inaudible series of the sound of *Aum*. When the piano wire is struck it is seen to vibrate repeating the sound *Aum*, *Aum*. All existence is *Aum*, Light, Air and Water are but *Aum*. God Himself is *Aum*. Such is the doctrine that converts all life into God—a pantheistic notion, no doubt, but it bathes all life in a spiritual fluid that elevates and sublimates human life. Who can deny its power to regenerate man ?

What is *Gayatri*, the Hindu's Common Prayer ? It is but a triplicate *Aum*. It is made up of three parts : to serve all the three purposes of religion, the first part is *Aum* itself which symbolises life as spread over the three states. The second consists of three syllables, *Bhus* (Earth) *Bhuvas* (the middle sphere) *Suvas* (Heaven) which stand for the whole of the perceptual Universe and the third part which is not a symbol but a sentence means. "We meditate on the sublime, that divine light of the Sun which impels the activities of our mind," or "We meditate on that sublime, that divine light of the Sun. May It impel the activities of our mind".

These three parts are equated thus:—*Aum* = *Bhus*, *Bhuvas*, *Suvas* = We meditate, etc. The student and the householder make use of the *Gayatri* as their spiritual shield and weapon, as an offensive and defensive equipment for Life, while the ascetic is perfectly panoplied in the *Aum*. The purposes for which *Gayatri* is used in the practical life of the religious Hindu are infinite. Far from his being a superstitious, idolatrous, ritual ridden creature that he is fancied to be, he is the denizen of a spiritual world, which he

ever carries with him in his realisation of the principle of the Universe, of God as symbolized for him in *Aum.* In his *Gayatri* he prays for a pure heart and a right understanding. He meditates on that supernal source at which the torchlight of this Sun is lighted; and Life is to him, not one but all the three states into which it unfolds itself. The intellect can hardly receive a loftier teaching. The utmost bounds of human capacity to know religious or philosophical truth are already reached.

It is often made the subject of grievous contention whether a Brahmana means only one born in a particular community and whether the *Vedic* study intended for the spiritual well-being of men can be confined to the so-called twice-born classes. My own opinion is that such a restriction is both wrong and unjustifiable. I should heartily welcome that happy day on which every living man will claim the privileges of the twice born. For to claim them is to have been already born a second time. The scales have fallen and the vision is restored. Universal truths, like the air we breathe, are meant for all mankind. No rule, no power can secure their monopoly.

CHAPTER XIX: SOME WESTERN OBJECTIONS

OBJECTIONS to Vedanta arise from two fertile sources: (1) prejudice and (2) misconception. We shall now consider one by one the points raised by Mr. Mackenzie against Vedanta in his suggestions for a constructive philosophy. (1) "The state of dreamless sleep", he says, "is assumed to be a conscious state. This assumption rests at least, partly on a rather obvious fallacy. We are said to be conscious of nothing, when it would seem to be more correct to say that we are unconscious of anything. The pure self-consciousness of which they speak is rather like the pure Being of Hegel, which cannot be distinguished from non-entity." This may be taken as a fair specimen of the criticism obviously resulting from misconception. Dreamless sleep is not taken by Vedanta to be a conscious state in the sense in which waking is one, that is, a subject-object experience. Consciousness is not there the subject perceiving nothing as its object. If it did, it would not differ from the waking experience in which one says "I am conscious of my innocence," or "I am conscious of no picture before me". In waking our consciousness is of the subject-object variety, and this empirical consciousness never acts except in the presence of an object. But when Mr. Mackenzie proceeds to correct the rather obvious fallacy and says, "it would seem to be more correct to say that we are unconscious of anything" he has totally failed to comprehend the position of Vedanta. For, his naive attempt to describe dreamless state as unconscious would be plainly impossible if it had not formed part of his positive experience so as to justify a statement on his part even in the form of a denial. You affirm it was an unconscious state. But how can you predicate anything about a past state, without implying thereby that you somehow knew it to be such or such? Supposing your then condition was *absolutely* unconscious as is that of a stone, could you make a statement about it with any degree of confidence or certainty?. And is it conceivable that consciousness such as marks our waking life, capable of taking in the most abstruse truths of science and mathematics, sensible to beauty, pleasure, pain, and duty, could develop from the condition of a stone. To think of even suspended cons-

ciousness you require consciousness. How then could a man be reduced to a state of absolute unconsciousness in sleep? In the next place, we wake with a memory of felicity and memory is impossible without reference to a past state of some kind of consciousness. That the subject-object consciousness is not there is the very pith and essence of Vedantic teaching, is the most convincing proof of the existence of Pure Consciousness, *i.e.*, Consciousness which has no object opposed to it and which has ceased to play the role of the subject. One might in some mood be disposed to deny Pure Consciousness but the denial is as strong a proof of its existence as its admission. He denies it because he knows that it did not exist at the time and this knowledge betrays the presence of the knower at the time, not, indeed, as knower, but as Pure Consciousness. As to the further remark of Mr. Mackenzie's that the Pure Consciousness as Pure Being is like Hegel's, identical with non-entity, he forgets that Hegel's Pure Being is a speculative entity, a mere intellectual concept while the Pure Consciousness of sleep is beyond the region of the intellect, and, as Life itself, is within the experience of all. This aspect of it has been already treated in detail.

We shall now pass on to the second objection stated as follows: "The felicity that is supposed to be enjoyed in deep sleep is, in general, refreshing. We may anticipate this with pleasure, and enjoy the consciousness of it when we awake. But this hardly entitles us to say that there is actual enjoyment in the sleep itself. It may be true, however, that there is a sort of subconscious enjoyment, but that would seem to belong rather to the organism than to the conscious subject. Perhaps this is what is intended, but if so, it does not seem to be made clear". Here the felicity of deep sleep is not and cannot be denied, unless the universal experience of it is taken to be delusive, but it is contended that there is no actual enjoyment of it on the part of the conscious subject. This is quite true, because the enjoyment is not of the subject-object kind. The subject lays aside its subjectivity, and hence the experience of felicity is not reducible to the terms of waking, namely, 'I am happy now.' There is no consciousness of time, or of the objective world, and hence the subjective part of the self vanishes. But if the felicity is unquestionable, of what kind can it be? Mr. Mackenzie suggests an answer. "It may be a subconscious enjoyment belonging to the organism". The reader who has followed the Vedantic method of reasoning would readily detect here the monobasic attitude which has been shown to be an

obstacle in the way of our apprehension of the higher Reality. Man, indeed, is an organism, considered from the waking point of view alone. But in compelling our knowledge of the other states to be cast in the mould of waking from which they are absolutely distinct, is to refuse to utilise the other elements of life without the inclusion of which in our consideration, our view of life must necessarily be partial and imperfect and cannot rise to the height of philosophy. Besides, consciousness which manifests itself in organic life transcends in its nature all forms of its own manifestation, and to discover its nature is the aim of Vedanta, which it does by a study of not one but all the three states in which life unfolds itself. All concepts of organic life, the concept of a body and the senses are restricted to waking, and deep sleep is just the aspect in which the concept of duality can find no place. If a man believes that sleep itself is possible only if he retains his organic life, he is guilty of transferring to an entirely independent aspect of life the conditions of waking. He does not catch the fundamentals of Vedanta to whom adheres the idea of a body and the senses, or of the external world persisting in his sleep. This is not to understand sleep as sleep, but sleep as an accessory to waking, which is untrue. Hence the felicity of sleep is the felicity which attaches to Pure Consciousness as its very nature, and this Pure Consciousness is but the subject divested of its subjectivity. It will not be correct to say that the subject as subject enjoyed the felicity, but it is impossible to ascribe the enjoyment to any one else, for, in the language of waking, one is forced to say, 'I felt the refreshing power of sleep,'—'I was happy.' This explanation ought to clear up the difficulty felt by Mr. Mackenzie in understanding the reference of Vedanta to the felicity of sleep. There is no supposition here but a clear reference to a positive fact of common experience.

The third objection restates what has been included in the first. It reads, "The conception of Brahman, being apparently reached by reflection on the Pure Self, shares in its negative character, and though said to be the whole Reality, hardly seems to be distinguishable from non-entity." Vedanta proves to demonstration that P.C. is the only Reality and the basis of all dualistic experiences of whatever kind. The prime entities of Life, Subject and Object, are its manifestations merely. To look upon it as non-entity no reason will consent or permit. The intellect delights in words and concepts, but Life with imperturbable muteness points to eloquent facts of experience, and the conclusion so drawn fears no criticism dictated by individual

predilections. The three states as aspects are distinct and unconnected. Each must be Reality or its manifestation, and we that experience them must be identical with the Reality. In the first place, Sleep is Pure Consciousness.

Dream and waking are each Pure Consciousness, differentiated into subject and object which again dissolve themselves into P. C. in sleep. We have thus three equal and parallel states each of which does not *add* itself to the other but is a different aspect of the same Reality. For, transcending Time and Space is the region in which they appear and neither co-existence nor succession can connect or separate them. They are alternative views of the same Reality which in its oneness is intuited in deep sleep, and in its manifestations is experienced as the other states. Hence Waking Life, with its ego and non-ego must be equated with it, and the reflection that brings home this truth to us is that in which we realize that we are the witness of the three states. A remark, here, may be helpful. When we reflect on our past experience of sleep, and on our condition in sleep, we realise that there was neither subject nor object. This realisation immediately, though for a moment, brings about identification of ourselves with Pure Consciousness. For, P. C. being not an object, its nature is intimated to us only by our laying aside our individuality and sinking into P. C., for however short a period. Hence the thought 'I slept, I dreamt, I awoke' must be repeated a number of times to enable us to perceive that the 'I' which is the common element of experience is an 'I' without its egoiety or subjectivity since though we easily co-ordinate the three states, there was no ego functioning in Deep Sleep. The common thread on which they are strung, is consequently, not the ego but the P.C. which the ego is, in its ultimate essence. The very thought of Pure Consciousness is Pure Consciousness. Though in common experience we distinguish between a chair and the idea of a chair because they are distinct, we cannot treat consciousness and our idea of it as two distinct things, for in this case the idea cannot be formed until it loses itself in consciousness. Similarly the idea of Pure Consciousness is truly Pure Consciousness itself.

"The conception of Brahman shares in the negative character of the Pure Self". Yes, in a sense. Brahman, the Absolute Reality, cannot be drawn into relations, by being invested with attributes. The latter are to be found in empirical realities which are within the domain of the empirical consciousness. Reason and experience alike rebel against a conception of Brahman as non-entity, for we

see that the ego and its manifold objects are but its manifestation; and no non-entity can manifest itself as this wonderful Universe, replete with Power and Beauty. Besides, the Vedantic concept of Brahman is all-inclusive, and P. C. in its kinetic aspect is the manifester of all, both subject and object. As such it is Brahman, the Reality of realities.

The fourth objection is set forth as follows:

"If Brahman is seriously to be described as the only reality, it is hard to see how there can be any intelligible explanation of the world of appearance. The distinction between Brahman as such and other activities described by such terms as *Maya* seems to introduce a surreptitious dualism, or even pluralism, which can hardly be reconciled with the emphasis on the Absolute One." "Vedanta as a Positive Science strictly withholds from speculation of any sort. It states facts and points out the truth that can alone be inferred from them. Since we start with the single principle of Pure Consciousness in sleep, the world of our waking must necessarily originate from it. There is no room for admitting a second reality. The external world is intelligible to the perceiving mind only because of the original kinship of both in Pure Consciousness. But this intelligibility of the world cannot extend beyond the waking state, or the region of time. To connect it as a creation with a pre-existing creator, or as a product of evolution with a nucleal principle outside of time is self-contradictory. For it is to connect an empirical fact with a source which transcends time. Even if the connection were possible, we should again slip inevitably back into the region of phenomena, and the attempt to connect Appearance with Reality by any manner of relationship is bound to baffle itself. The whole difficulty arises from an illusion. We perceive that in practical life everything viewed as an effect can be traced to a cause. Causality is thus conceived as Universal and we apply it to the world as a whole. We forget that causality operates only in time and the world as a whole must include time itself. Hence, it cannot be regarded as an effect in the same sense as any part of the world is. Neither can it be considered as an act of creation on the part of an extraneous agent, God. In that case He should have made it out of nothing, and nothing it should substantially be. It cannot be an emanation, for then it would be of the same nature as the source and again all would be reduced to the status of phenomena. Hence, we can only conclude that it is a manifestation of Reality which endows it with life and existence. Vedanta discloses this Reality as the Pure Consciousness of Sleep, and as the ego and

non-ego of the other states. The intelligibility of the world can be pushed no further. Reason and Experience will both break into shivers with an additional strain put on them.

The doctrine of *Maya* is an attempt to explain the evolution of multiplicity from the primal unity. It belongs to the portion of Vedantic speculation which has reached its height in the concept of *Maya*. But *Maya* is not admitted to the rank of the highest Reality, *viz.*, Brahman, and the oneness of the latter is absolutely intact. From the highest point of view no dualism, much less pluralism can stand, but empirically dualism is ascribed to *Maya* or the principle of nescience which can, therefore, claim but an empirical Reality. The truth is we find Pure Consciousness persisting unchanged in all aspects of Life, and yet we perceive the duality of the ego and the non-ego in waking. The latter can be conceived only as an apparent transformation of Pure Consciousness since they cannot be traced to any other origin. Hence, it must be that Pure Consciousness while retaining its changeless integrity can also transform itself into the ego and the non-ego at the same time. Facts of life justify this conclusion and *Maya* is a term signifying these tendencies in Brahman which to the understanding appears so opposed. It is only assumed to explain the manifold; and, being not the supreme Reality, does not introduce a surreptitious dualism as Mr. Mackenzie fears. To realise Brahman as the only Reality, no *Maya* is necessary, and it may be noticed that we have dispensed with the assumption in dealing with the positive aspect of Vedanta.

The next objection is worded as follows: "If the world is properly to be described as a dream or creation or emanation of Brahman and if Brahman is to be regarded as an absolutely Perfect Being in the contemplation of which we attain felicity, it would seem that the dream of such a Being even, if in some sense illusory, must at least have a real significance, and be the expression of some essential aspect of the Life of Brahman ".

We have shown already that Vedanta does not admit the view that the world is a creation or emanation from Brahman, but looks on it as a manifestation of Brahman. To regard it as a dream of Brahman, indicating perhaps thereby its illusory nature, is hardly acceptable. For dream occurs to those that sleep and the fundamental truth of Vedanta is that Brahman neither sleeps nor dreams. Besides, our readers that have followed our explanation of the nature of sleep will readily perceive that sleep is negatively

described as an experience of the non-existence of the world, *i.e.*, from the waking standpoint, but in itself it is Pure Consciousness or Brahman. To ascribe sleep in the ordinary sense to Brahman imposes too much of human frailty upon Brahman, and is wrong. In the metaphysical acceptation of the term Sleep as Pure Consciousness, why, He is ever that and cannot depart from His own nature. No dream can, therefore, be an essential aspect of the life of Brahman. The individual soul is assuredly spoken of figuratively as sleeping until he realises his oneness with Brahman. He is then said to wake from his dream of a multiple world to his own divine nature. The world is not a dream but a manifestation of Brahman, that is to say, Brahman the highest Reality appears to us as the world which in essence is Brahman, and nothing else. This has been established as a fact of experience, and the question why Brahman wears this mask takes us beyond the limits of the human understanding and can be answered only by some theory, such as that of *Maya*, as has been already stated. This disposes of the next observation that 'if it is our supreme end to identify ourselves with Brahman, this must surely mean that we appropriate his dream as well, and appreciate its significance". Brahman can indulge in no dream, but the manifestation has a deep significance for us. The world as self-expression of Brahman places before us as an objective reality all the power and beauty implied in His nature, in order that it might lead us to realize our divine essence, and triumph over our lower self. This if we look at Brahman through the world; but if Brahman is realised as the whole of Reality including all Life, our sense of identity with Brahman resolves all into it without a remainder, and the world is simply overpassed. To talk of a balance, still left to account for, is to miscalculate, is to make Brahman only a part of a greater whole.

Mr. Mackenzie next observes (sixth objection): "If it is our supreme end to identify ourselves with Brahman this must surely mean that we appropriate his dream as well, and appreciate its significance". Now, Brahman is the highest Reality which we intuite as Pure Consciousness in what is known as deep sleep. If we realize our nature as pure, that is to say, secondless Reality on which rests all experiences of the dream or waking variety which as manifestations are but a lower or empirical Reality, we shall find that, in our higher nature as Brahman, there can be no plurality and no relations, and that dreaming and waking cannot be attributed to the Eternal Witness that, transcending all sphere of change, can yet perceive all change.

The active aspect of Brahman is necessarily assumed to satisfy the cause-seeking intellect that strives to explain the origin of the phenomenal world. When, however, the causal instinct is gratified by tracing the world to the only source within our experience, *viz.*, the P. C. of sleep, we next proceed to enquire into the nature of P. C. and we find that it is one, eternal, changeless Reality. The enquirer at this stage has risen above the phenomenal plane, and drops his individuality which with its correlate, the world, disappears entirely. The difficulty felt by Mr. Mackenzie arises from his not having really carried his reflections to this pitch. He retains his stand on the empirical and endeavours to catch at the transcendental. The two positions are mutually opposed, and cannot be held at the same time. It is like the attempt of one learning to swim, who plants one foot firmly on the ground under water and strikes out with his other leg. He can never learn swimming, till he lets go both the legs at once and supports himself on the water alone. Hence, in the highest sense, Brahman has no dream, and when we identify ourselves with Brahman, we have once for all disposed of all dreams and manifestations.

The seventh objection now puts up its head. It is the forlorn hope and has a long train. Mr. Mackenzie says: "It would seem to follow from this that the pessimistic view about the world of our experience which seems to be inseparable from such a conception of the Absolute as that which is set forth by the Vedanta ought to be eliminated. To the Vedantin life is brimming over with joys, is *Ananda*, blessedness and the human soul is heir to an estate of everlasting bliss. Pessimism is the last thing to find a place in the system of Vedanta. There is no evil in Reality. All is Brahman and even the greatest of ills, that monster Death, who exacts his inevitable toll from every living being cannot frighten him. Death has only an empirical life and in our transcendental nature we put Death to death. Our full life as Pure Consciousness overflows and submerges in its flood, the rocks of both birth and death. Besides, the charge of pessimism against the system comes as a surprise to a Vedantin. For when he sees God in everything—in volitions, actions, feelings, in internal and external life—when he sees God as everything and his own identity with God, he feels that supreme blessedness and peace which spring from the knowledge that he has no want to be satisfied, that he has realized the ultimate purpose of all life and action, that no evil can touch his spirit, and that there is no good left for him to aspire to. In fact this position is one of ultra optimism. All sense of deficiency, of

want and of consequent pain, of regret or fear have fled from him, and his attitude towards life in general and the world cannot be realized by those who have not acquired his vision, and to whom partial views have made existence a sphere of continual yearning and struggle. They have not tamed and subdued their will. The Vedantin has often, on the contrary, been accused of passivity, of indifference, of a love of inaction, of very selfishness. Conceive his position placed between these two fires. "He must be sad and miserable, for he sees no good in the illusory world of the senses", says one critic. "He must be selfish, seeking his own happiness indifferent to the suffering world", says the other. But how do these misconceived charges really affect him? With a love wide as the world, with the conviction that his interests embrace those of all creation, he may, as he chooses, employ himself in works of compassionate service, or in secluded contemplation on the glory of God. With the last vestige of selfishness completely overcome he is above all codes of action or inaction which individual and social interests dictate. He has become the Christ who in his own crucifixion has secured deliverance for himself and the world. With the yoke of individuality and ignorance solely galling our neck, we may not conceive the incomparable blessedness of his state, but let that not impel us to let fly undeserved darts of futile criticism at his unquestionable victory over the infinite ills of unenlightened life. All that really concerns us is to satisfy ourselves that Vedanta is Truth. If it is, then we must accept the consequence, and fling aside all other considerations.

The eighth and last objection is stated as follows: "It would seem also that the doctrine of degrees of Reality with which we are familiar in western thought, is used to bridge the gulf between Appearance and Reality. In the same work (*Panchadasi*, translated into English by Dr. M. S. and Mr. K. A. K.) to which reference has just been made, the following passage occurs:—

'According to Vedanta there are three grades of Reality—the highest pertaining to Brahman (called *Paramarthikasatta*), the second being the experience of the wakeful state and the third the experience of the dreaming state and of the illusions of the wakeful state. It is evident that a tiger which one meets with in a dream can be killed only with a spear seen in the dream also. Any number of spears lying by the side of the dreamer, although they belong to a higher grade of reality, can never help him in an encounter with the tiger in the dream. Similarly, Pure Consciousness or Brahman, which is the highest Reality, can never affect anything else, for if it were able to affect anything

else, there would be a relation established between them, which again would lead to a duality.' To this, it may be enough to answer that there is a very close relation between our dream experiences and those of our waking life. Most dreams can be accounted for by the experiences of our waking life. If there is no similar relation between our waking life and the Universe of Brahman, it would seem that the distinction between the first grade of reality and the second is different in kind from that between the second and the third ". With reference to this criticism we must not forget that Vedanta is not mere speculation whose materials are furnished by the single experience of waking life. The reality of Vedanta is not a postulate, but is what is presented to us in real life comprehending all the states. Hence there is a difference between western ideas of Reality and the Vedantic. To the western thinker, a relation must exist between the various degrees of reality, as he views the reality through the intellect-intuition, and since the mind, unless supplemented by the deeper intuition, can conceive things only in relations, the higher and the lower are still of the same empirical kind resulting in an *en passe* when the attempt is made to derive the many from the one. For do what we will, what is strictly One to start with cannot by any intellectual gymnastics be imagined to give rise to plurality, without an implication of power and tendencies in the One in which the many is potentially present. The beard is only cloaked. "I like not when a 'oman has a great peard." The One from this standpoint becomes an organism, which lives by continual evolution and which is helpless with regard to the changes it must undergo. It may be assumed to be free, as it is self-determined, but really even its self-determination must be of a fixed nature, and it cannot forego to act in time. Vedanta assigns a lower place to such a concept of Reality, for we actually intuite a reality which is beyond time and change. The Pure Consciousness which we experience in sleep, time after time with no change, or modification, dissolves the subject and the object alike in its undifferentiated oneness. Hence Brahman as the Absolute is free from all relations and it is only with reference to its manifestation it has to be assumed as the cause. As we have already shown, no relation can subsist between Reality and its manifestation, for the link of relationship between them would inevitably make Brahman itself an element of empirical life. In the first place, Pure Consciousness is found to be unchanged and secondless. In the next place, we find that while it accompanies all life without undergoing any change, there is also side by

side with it an empirical life ruled by time, space and causality which we experience and which again in sleep it dissolves into itself. These are facts. Vedantic explanation is built upon them. The empirical world which appears and disappears cannot claim the rank of Pure Consciousness which is eternally One and changeless. But the world appearing as the field of action and enjoyment, along with the ego as the agent, claims a reality, and one of the second degree is accorded to it, since within the waking state its existence cannot be denied.

As to the relation existing between dream and waking and the expectation of a similar relation between waking and Brahman, facts of life alone must be relied on for our guidance. Now what is meant by degrees of Reality? When a criminal leaves his home at night, and escapes into a forest to avoid punishment, he might mistake a bush for a constable and hide himself behind a tree to avoid him. When as dawn approaches, he sees objects in a clearer light, he discovers the true character of what frightened him at first and laughs away his fears. Here it is undeniable that he first believed or suspected that a policeman was advancing towards him to apprehend him. The notion begot his fears. But when the real fact was disclosed to him later, he finds that it was all a mistake, an illusion and that there really was no policeman at all. Now we might easily explain psychologically how the illusion arose, what part his own conscience played in creating it. But no explanation can warrant us in denying that at the time he behaved in exactly the manner of a man who believed in the reality of what he imagined. He became alive, of course, to the falsity of the appearance when he perceived the ground of his illusion, *viz.*, the bush and identified it as such. The policeman of his fancy never existed at all, anywhere or at any time. Similarly in dream, we meet with egos and non-egos and, at the time, we behave, the ego behaves, in a very strange manner, strange to ourselves. When waking succeeds, we become aware of the illusion, though during the dream we believed in the reality of what happened or appeared. This experience of dream as dream is undeniable but it is a travesty of terms to say that the dream-occurrences were real. It was all a dream, we say, and mean that such events never actually took place, the objects never really presented themselves to us. While therefore as states, waking and dream are equally real, the contents of our experience in the two cases are totally opposed in character. Dream-contents are simply brushed away as unreal, while waking life is regarded as the supreme Reality.

It cannot be contended that a dream-tree had a certain amount of waking reality half or a fourth; for reality is not to be represented as an arithmetical quantity; and we granted a certain degree of reality, not because it was a fraction of waking reality but because it impressed us at the time as reality, though later experience proved its falsity. In terms of waking life, we conclude that the dream-tree was a mere illusion. It had no actual existence. Explanation of the dream is a later mental process, and the impressions of waking experience are referred to as the cause of the dream. Even then all dreams do not admit of an explanation; still the mind with its causal instinct satisfies itself with the belief that dream is simply a fanciful combination of the elements of waking life. But in so exercising our reasoning faculties to explain a dream, we miss the real import of dream-life. What is a dream-tree? You may explain its appearance, but what is the value to be attached to the thing itself in terms of waking reality? We must admit as all do in practical life, that it was an illusion. *No relation can be established between the dream-tree and the waking tree.* The dream-tree was a real creation, a real manifestation of Brahman, though it counts not, it cannot be related in any conceivable manner to the waking tree. Similarly, our waking life is a reality, a manifestation of Brahman, created by It, not with some extraneous material, but itself appearing as such. It has its laws and processes. Time, space and causality are its characteristic elements and egos and non-egos its inevitable form. But between the reality of Brahman and that of waking life there is considerable distinction to be made. The waking objects, and happenings are real as long as the state continues, but no longer. Their reality for the time being is undeniable. We act from real motives, for real ends. We have real pain and pleasure. Our conduct may be right or wrong. Still this does not constitute a claim on the part of waking life to the supreme Reality of Brahman which never sleeps or dreams but is eternally awake, which is the imperishable ground of all its glorious manifestations, and which in its immutable oneness defies any endeavour to relate it to anything else in time or place. You may call it static if you like, for it stands unchanged in the midst of change. You may call it dynamic, for in its manifestations it evolves itself into a world-process. But static and dynamic are our terms coined by the time-bound intellect working under the laws of causality. It may be observed that even empirical life is not devoid of evidences of its identity with Brahman. Our love of truth for its own sake, our search for reality, our readiness to sacrifice, our own interests

for those of society, all self-denying acts of love and compassion, our faith in a better life succeeding this, our hope that things would'somehow right themselves, our love and esteem of righteousness, all these can be only an outcome of the activity of an instinct that is unerring, and that pierces the veil that Brahman puts on in manifesting itself as the waking world. Even this dream of Brahman, if Brahman can dream at all, is full of profound significance, in the state of our probation. But to push it further, beyond its limits, and to demand that it have some meaning even after Brahman is realized, is unwarranted. For, in the first place, it is only an ego, one considering himself as an individual among individuals, that can possibly have a dream. In dream as in waking, the individuality of the ego is the prime condition; for, then alone, can there be a sense of otherness. But when the latter is transcended as when one finds himself one with Brahman, there can be no otherness, and consequently no dream. Brahman or Pure Consciousness cannot dream, nor he that realizes himself as such, for the simple reason that the realization implies the loss of all sense of egoism or individuality.

But the trouble with most people is that they conceive Pure Consciousness either as an abstract idea or as a mental state. This illusion must be first overcome. Pure Consciousness is Reality, the whole of Reality, comprising all its manifestations, the egos and the non-egos. When a man realises his Brahman-hood, he does not look upon himself as an object among objects. He is the All. Nothing is excluded from his self, neither the world, nor the egos peopling it, and they apply to Brahman with equal appropriateness or inappropriateness. But when the ego identifies itself with the witness of the states, it has already transcended the three states, and how much more indescribable is the oneness of Brahman of which the witness is the only aspect conceivable by the human mind! It may be remarked here that when we regard ourselves as the witness of the states, we have already risen beyond egoism and individuation, and since this experience is common to all human beings each of whom says, 'I slept, I dreamt, I awoke', the transcendental nature of the ego is perceived to be within the experience of all. While thus the Brahman-hood of man is undeniable, it must be equally apparent that no relation can be established between Brahman and the world, just as no relation can be established between the dream-tree and the waking tree. Hence there is no disparity between the relation of dream to waking on the one hand and the relation of

waking to the Universe of Brahman on the other. For no relation can really exist between degrees of Reality.

A doubt may arise, how then is the term 'degree' to be justified? The answer is, there is one common characteristic of all degrees of reality. Each one is undeniable. But they differ in the degrees of undeniability. The illusions of a dream are, so long as it endures, looked upon as undeniable facts of experience which give rise to feelings and volitions, but are stultified by waking life when their true character is recognised. Similarly the facts of waking life, with its plurality of objects and happenings dissolve into the oneness of Brahman, when philosophical reflexion unmistakably points to their limitation and circumscription.

He then transcends all distinctions, though he is the basis of All. His nature cannot be described as I, thou, or It. It is All and transcends All. Thus, Vedantic truth reveals that all multiplicity is due to our want of knowledge of the nature of Reality, and that Brahman, *i.e.*, our own true self, is altogether free from either sleep or dream. A well-known verse from Gaudapada's *Karika* says, "When the individual soul laid to sleep by want of true knowledge at last awakes, he realizes then the oneness of that Reality which is unborn, unsleeping and undreaming." Besides, Pure Consciousness cannot be conceived by the human mind, for it never can be an object. Even while we describe it in this negative manner, we do objectify it, and do injustice to its real nature. But it is the fact of facts, and can only be intuited as in deep sleep, or in *Yogic* or religious trance actively brought about by one-pointed concentration. This intuition, however, by itself avails us nothing. It is the knowledge of the nature of Brahman derived from it that can alone lead to the deliverance of the human soul tormented by selfish desire, and tortured by consequent pain. Thus the illusions of a dream, the experiences of waking life, and Pure Consciousness are each undeniable facts of life, but while the two first are restricted to the time and modes of their manifestation, Pure Consciousness alone which comprehends all life is eternally present. Hence they belong to different degrees of Reality.

Mr. Mackenzie proceeds to observe that there are difficulties 'involved in any attempt to make a sharp division between appearance and reality', and 'that the difficulties are rather evaded than solved by the doctrine of grades of Reality. The difficulties appear in a more acute form in the system of Vedanta than in the doctrines of Plato and of modern writers.' He is quite right.

If we confine our observation to waking experience alone, our concept of Reality—even the highest we can rise to—will still be a concept, and as such can not transcend the region of phenomena, howsoever we may juggle with our own mental faculties. The mind cannot jump out of its own skin, time and causality. The division between reality and appearance would still remain an intellectual division, and the Reality cannot be an absolute unity. It must contain a potential world of multiplicity in itself. We cannot draw blood out of a post. But Vedanta goes beyond the intellect and observes life from a fuller, a more comprehensive point of view. It is enabled to do this by means of intuition which is the privilege of man. The distinction it makes between reality and appearance is not a division. It is the only way of understanding the facts of life manifesting itself in the form of the three states, and the grades are not what Vedanta creates but what it finds. Even philosophers like Plato were led to recognize the distinction between appearance and reality, because they felt instinctively that the life as we perceive is not the All. Their higher nature made them suspect the pretensions of temporal life to be the All and they were virtually right in seeking a key to the mystery in a higher life. But their speculation being based on a mono-basic view, cannot beget the confidence of absolute truth. From the empirical standpoint, Vedanta's distinction between appearance and reality would, no doubt, present difficulties in a more acute form. For, while it takes up an uncompromising attitude with regard to the absolute oneness of Brahman, yet it derives all duality from it. The position of modern monists might seem more understandable, since their One includes a potential many. But we forget that this is no monism at all, strictly speaking; and to have traced the evolved many to the One incubating is no solution to the mystery. For, how can the One give rise to the many? If it had contained the many in it already, in however subtle a form, then the oneness is a misnomer. The instance of a seed growing up into the tree will not help us. For, the same difficulty reappears. If we were endowed with sufficiently powerful vision, we should be able to detect in the seed all the elements of growth that promise a tree. Besides, the view of organic development leaves out Time, Space and Causality to be additionally explained, and the whole remains shrouded in the same mystery that we started to explain. It must be clear, therefore, that strict monism which we feel to be the only goal of philosophy is yet far from our reach so long as we are domineered by the waking experience.

As we have already stated, the grades of Reality are not a postulate but an incontrovertible fact in life which must be taken as we find it, and which cannot be ignored on account of any kind of difficulties raised by the intellect.

Also the conception of the time-series as an eternal cycle, so that it returns to the point from which it started or as an eternal straight line which never so returns, is altogether foreign to the main purpose of Vedanta which is to disclose the Reality that transcends all time. It may be of interest in empirical life, but cannot affect the higher Truth.

CHAPTER XX: VEDANTA AND GREEK SPECULATION

ANCIENT GREEKS

TO those who have followed the Vedantic method of reasoning unfolded in the foregoing pages it must have become evident that it is altogether unique, and that no other system of thought can bear to be compared with Vedanta in breadth of vision, or comprehensiveness of grasp. But it must be admitted that western thinkers, from the time of the ancient Greeks, have ceaselessly put up a brave fight with the problems of life, showing thereby the activity in them of that human instinct which will not rest satisfied with the dim and misleading twilight of the intellect, but craves evermore for that supernal light that shall once for all dispel the darkness of the Soul. Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel were men of extraordinary insight and erudition, of which any age or country might be justly proud. If their strenuous efforts have not led to results universally acceptable, surely the fault lay not so much with the men as in the one-sided view they took of life. According to an ancient Hindu myth Truth is imprisoned in a three-fold stronghold of *Maya*, and can be set free only when all the three are simultaneously attacked and demolished. Siva with the co-operation of Brahma and Vishnu addressed himself to the task of reducing the three abodes of *Maya*, earning the title of Tripurantaka, the destroyer of the three cities. Every one of us must do this likewise for himself.

My idea in giving a brief account of the progress of speculation in the West is to show, as far as I can, how far each thinker advanced towards Truth and how the absence of a tri-basic view rendered his conclusions mere opinions, theoretical thought-positions, which failed to produce general conviction, and which made it necessary as well as possible for every successive thinker to strike out a new path for himself, that terminated again in another wilderness. I shall also take notice of such objections as have been raised against Vedantic doctrines, and in answering them endeavour to point out how a fundamental misconception has been at their very root. It is sad to find that while Western speculation has suffered from a

defective method, the westerners, far from attempting to discover and remedy their own short-comings, criticise Vedanta with a self-confidence which is hard to justify.

Modern Europeans are proud to trace the source of their philosophical speculations to the ancient Greeks. Indeed it must be admitted that excepting in one or two important features the moderns have made no great advance beyond Plato and Aristotle. In one way this domination of Greek thought and an early adoption of Christianity are, I believe, responsible for their failure to look in other places for that fulness of spiritual view that a comprehension of truth demands. Plato and Aristotle with their doctrine of Ideas and Universals, determined the bias of thought in favour of Concepts as against Percepts, and led the way to the spread of dry intellectualism which was destined to meet with powerful opposition from Schopenhauer, Bergson and James in modern times and which enabled the intellect, a mere faculty of perception and reflection, to dethrone the Soul itself and reign in its stead. Schopenhauer was the first to hoist the claims of the Will as opposed to those of the Hegelian Idea or Reason, and Bergson and James showed that the fundamental fact in life is Life itself and that the intellect is but its servant. Similarly, much of the crudeness in religious beliefs and practices, along with undoubtedly many salutary features, is due to the early apostles of Christianity. Centuries of unquestioned faith reconciled the people to the strange principles based on them. The doctrines of Transubstantiation, of Vicarious Satisfaction, of Sin and Death, of Trinity and of The Last Judgment—these are accepted by the moderns, not because they are the outcome of thought, but because they are matters of faith transmitted to them from very early times. It appears, therefore, that in Religion and Philosophy the old traditions inherited by Europeans have acted as a dead weight upon their reason and understanding and stood in the way of their developing on lines better suited to the level of their culture in other respects. The endeavours on the part of great thinkers like Bradley, Gentile, James and Russell to emancipate the human mind from the fetters of dogma and intellectual vassalage, however glorious or sanctified by age and custom, have been certainly a move in the right direction and a clear indication of its necessity in the interests of Truth. Both Idealism and Realism which have divided opinion and forced men into opposite camps alike suffer from the incomplete view of life inseparable from confining attention to a single expression of it. Life is not, all of it, a mere idea, an objective idea; nor is

it to be defined as an objective existence. The Greeks from the beginning perceived that all was not really as it appeared, and while Parminides taught that Being alone was the real, Heraclitus later claimed reality only for Becoming. But it might be said that in general the aim of the western thinkers absolutely differed from that of the Hindu. Though both set out in quest of Truth and Reality, the former attempted to arrive at it by an analysis of the world, of the external side of life, which was imagined to include the whole of it. The Hindu, on the other hand, proceeded on another track, and by a more comprehensive view was able to seize on Truth and Reality with greater success. The difference between the two outlooks is radical.

PLATO

Plato is regarded as the father of European Idealism. He inculcated the doctrine of Ideas and of the unreality of individual existence. Yet, since in his scheme of life he could not get rid of matter, though he named it a mere non-being, he could not steer clear of dualism altogether; and Aristotle shared a similar fate. Yet what is the philosophic value of their theory? They rose, it is true, above the vulgar belief in the reality of objects perceived, and distinguished between a real principle of the world and phenomenal existence, such as that of a tree or a hill, but their reality is a mere concept, an idea; and to say that that includes and explains all life is an illusion which has long enjoyed a high prestige and honour because some of the greatest thinkers have supported it. But a concept is a concept and nothing more. As James remarks the concept of a dog cannot bark or bite. We must distinguish between a concept and a percept. Language, it is true, is made up of concepts only and every word stands for one. But life transcends mere words. My seeing a tree is a life-event, a vital occurrence, an immediacy of experience, which can never be indicated by means of language. The tree which I see is quite distinct from the tree which is my concept. It is a fact inserted in life—an object I perceive, different from the idea I have of it and from my act of perception. I cannot indeed convey my meaning except in words which are conceptual counters, but all the same I know—and nothing can dislodge this knowledge from my mind—that the tree there, as the original of my concept, is perhaps more real than the latter to which it has given birth. What if the object is perishable, or is undergoing momentary change and development? That is but fit and proper. Change and development are signs of life and proofs of reality,

while the concept incapable of growth might enjoy a dead eternity but certainly can not deserve a higher place as a reality than the perceptual flow which is the source of all my immediacy of experience. Concepts, we may admit, have their own merits, but they cannot be allowed to monopolise life. Life would be empty without percepts though it might be blind without concepts. In the next place, the ego is certainly an integral part of life, and the concepts are the products of my mind, of me as an ego. To assert that this concept is more real than myself whose convenience it subserves, that it is more important than action to which it leads and by which life is maintained, is preposterous and not calculated to convince one who feels that he must first exist before he could form concepts. Besides, if life consisted only of concepts or percepts where would have been the need for philosophic enquiry? We feel that there is something more than either, and to resolve that something more into the terms of conceptual or perceptual existence, which is alone familiar to the common man, is to forfeit the prerogatives of the human mind and to be content with an idea of life degrading because false. Further, can my feelings be converted into concepts? Do I conceive my feeling although I feel it? Well, it might be said that I conceive that I feel. But then, is there no feeling apart from conceiving it? A real, genuine feeling is indeed inexpressible. It cannot be couched in words. For every word is but a concept, and a feeling transcends concepts, and is the more radical element of life which I share with all animals.

On the one hand, to maintain that every object that I perceive is really as it appears to me is to make no allowance for the part played by my understanding and senses, without which an external object can never succeed in impressing me with its existence at all. To go further and affirm a substrate behind the percept, which is for ever imperceptible but which is responsible for the appearance, is, on the other hand, taking a leap in the dark. Whatever is real must be related to me in some way or other and it serves no purpose to assume a reality that cannot be brought in the last resort into such relationship. The Soul is the touchstone of Reality and what is not within experience is not within the bounds of Reality.

It may be said, however, as is done constantly by modern Idealists, that the concept which is the principle of the world is not my concept or your concept or even God's, but the objective concept. Now, what is this objective concept? Can I conceive it as outside of my mind? And, if I so conceive, does it

not still continue to be my concept? The idea of objectivity is itself an idea of my mind. How can I go beyond its domain? "The object," says Gentile, "with absolutely no relation to the subject is nonsense. This non-subjective reality is a reality posited by the subject, therefore itself subjective, in the absolute sense, and non-subjective only relatively to the degree or mode of subjectivity of a reality in all other respects subjective." (page 121, *Mind as Pure Act*). It is therefore futile to talk of an objective mind, thought or concept, independently of an individual mind like mine or yours. In fact, what is individuality but a concept of my mind? If it is feared that this would lead to Solipsism, the answer is that it is the only consummation of all Idealism pushed to its utmost limits. If fear of Solipsism should prevent one from glancing at the farther end of Idealism, yet love of truth should not let one stop short.

To bridge the chasm between a concept and the 'thing' the Idealist makes use of the doctrine of the identity of Knowing and Being. But this is suicidal, for it "denies the possibility of the opposition of the one to the other which is an indispensable moment in the concept of knowing, and therefore denies the possibility of knowing. To know is to distinguish, and knowing implies that there are more terms than one, and that we are not confined to only one." (Gentile's *Mind as Pure Act*, page 109).

Neither the Idealists nor the Realists have a true idea of Reality as beyond time, or timeless. To realise it as a concept which is eternal is still to include it in the sphere of time, though it is not supposed to be affected by it. This is to conceive it as an empirical entity. The notion of Reality as superior to time is to be obtained only through the intuitive comprehension of the three states. The Absolute Idea cannot be that Reality.

Thus to a Vedantin Greek thought, however profound, can only have an empirical and historical interest. Plato and Aristotle were great thinkers, and they display powerful intuitions at work in them, but their reasoning was limited to the contents of waking experience, and they wholly lacked that all-inclusive view which only the Vedantic method can render possible. They appear to have believed in *Rebirth*, and perhaps they had a faint idea of a doctrine similar to that of *Karma*; but the facts bearing on these points have not been fully placed before us, because perhaps Christian Europe is indifferent to those features of Greek belief which are unrelated to her modern creed.

Moreover, concepts are discontinuous, are not spatial or temporal existences. How do they combine to make an object? Horse is

a universal. It is made of countless universals. Yet, how does it become this horse? Even individuality, being a universal, cannot help to make an individual. Thus the concept as a principle with which to explain the world, is a still-born child. To convert an epistemological convenience into an ontological principle is an incurable obsession with the idealist, who cannot realize the distinction between immediacy of life or experience and concepts which mediate it. In the next place, movement, change, process, these are the active phases of life. How can a concept, which is dead and inert, communicate or receive motion? A concept of change cannot change. Objects, appearances and movement as direct presentations of consciousness may give rise to concepts but certainly are not concepts—concepts are not perceptible. Volition is not concept. A feeling is not reducible to a mere concept. Concepts cannot cover the entire ground of life.

Again, concepts imply consciousness. I am myself consciousness, a reality unquestionable, and concepts are products of my mental activity. Hence they presuppose my mind and myself as their very source. Mind and self may be concepts but they cannot be concepts without an individual mind or self that gives birth to them, and how is such a mind to be explained? Moreover, a concept implies subject and object, and the two latter are opposed to each other as light and darkness. What is the concept that will explain the diremption of a first principle into two such opposites? Besides, a concept is a mere limbless trunk. It can neither split, nor be split, neither move nor be moved. To imagine that the world-process is explained by an Idea is the grossest illusion to which the human mind can be subjected.

The Idealists lay stress on the difference between Reality and Existence. This idea of existence is, however, a mere hoax. If you peel off its outer integument, you will find "unreality" writ large inside. But if all is the Idea or Reason, why make an illegitimate distinction between Reality and Existence? The only explanation is that the Idea wears different disguises when it assumes existence; and we must look through these to seize upon it. Things are not what they seem. The question remains, why should Reality assume existence? If the Idea wishes to realize itself, shall it be by assuming the form of existence which is unreal? Hence this entry of the Idea into individual forms must be either true or untrue. If true, no reason can be shown, if untrue, no reason need be shown, for there can be none. The Idealists move in a see-saw of untenable positions. On the one hand, they have not the boldness to deny that the perceptual world is real. That would make them lose

caste with the Philistines whom they would not offend. They call it existence, existence in time and space. On the other hand, it is not real. Only concepts are real. Why? Because, the existence of objects depends on concepts. *But is not the concept itself likewise derived from the objects perceived?* Yes, but it is real. For, should we not concede that that which confers existence on a thing should itself have being, and be real? "The existence of things depends on universals. Without them, things would not exist. Now, we cannot suppose that universals on which the very existence of things depends are nothing, have no being of any sort. We must admit, then, that universals have being." (page 19, *The philosophy of Hegel* by W. F. Stace). But what are universals? Universals are merely products of a mental analysis of a percept, and are useful in identifying and recognizing external objects. They are neither seen, heard, nor felt; and because they can be detached mentally from the real flow of things, are they to be lifted to the position of Reality, while the source, namely, the world of history and novelty, ever changing, ever fresh, and ever instinct with life and movement is to be degraded into existence—which is but an honorific surname for unreality? Now we know that concepts or universals arise from a mind perceiving an external world. We do not know that that world or that mind depends for its existence on Universal. It is the very opposite of fact. And this extravagant claim is made simply because 'things' lend themselves to be mentally analysed into concepts. Concepts, of course, are not nothing. They are representations of things for the perceiving mind, intellectual counters necessary for purposes of life, for cognition and action, and have cognitive and practical values. But why should the counters claim higher reality or value than genuine coins? Why should they *be* while things only *exist*? As to their dead permanence and unchangeableness, that is certainly due to their being isolated from the *Living Flow*,—an obvious defect, more than a virtue. Their objectivity, I have already shown, is a pure myth; for objectivity itself is a concept inheriting the disabilities of the community. A concept is like blood drawn from the living body, and exposed to the air. It clots and ceases to flow. It has lost its vitality. It suffers from the bane of intellectual contact.

It is not true that concepts are eternal, and absolutely changeless. Human mind is ever active, and life ever changing. Hence, even concepts undergo modification by the effect of time and experience. The concept of 'husband', has a different meaning for a woman after marriage from what it had before. Life to an old man signifies something other than what it did when he was

young and inexperienced. The joy of riches anticipated by the poor man shrinks in volume when he has attained it. And so with other concepts. There is none that is not affected perceptibly or imperceptibly by widened experience, or observation; and the class of concepts is no more immortal than their forbear the perceptual flux. The gulf that separates concepts from percepts is so wide as to be unbridgeable, since no percept has ever sprung from a concept or concepts in general, as its material cause, and the Hegelian doctrine that a universal begets its own opposite, and both coalesce into a concrete individual, is an audacious fancy impossible of proof or realization in life. "The impotence to explain Being", says James, "is a conceptual impotence." For all evidences point the other way. A concept arises from a percept, but no concept can ever give birth to a percept, in spite of the power of cognition to break up the percept into its constituent concepts. Perception indeed implies a mind, but this is an empirical mind whose power embraces cognition but cannot pass on to creation, notwithstanding instances of illusion and hallucination in which the mind ceases to act as a normal mind, and of which the explanation must involve ultra-mental elements of life.

According to Plato and Aristotle, the Idea is static. "For Plato," says Gentile, "every Idea in the totality of its relations is what is, what it is impossible to think of as changing and being transformed. We can pass from one Idea to another, and in passing we can integrate an initial Idea with the cognition of relations with which formerly it had not been thought; but this movement and process in us supposes rest, fixity and immutability in the Idea itself. This is the Platonic and Aristotelian standpoint." (page 42, *Mind as Pure Act*). "For Aristotle as for Plato, nature is not an object of science in so far as it is nature; and in so far as it is an object of science at all it is no longer nature, no longer movement, but pure form. It is a concept and a system of concepts. The Aristotelian Becoming, in so far as it is not and cannot be the Becoming of thought, remains a mere postulate. As thing thought of, it is not Becoming; as Becoming it cannot be Thought" (pages 47-48, *Mind as Pure Act*).

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle's Idealism has not succeeded in getting rid of matter absolutely. For, according to him, things are composed of matter and form, in varying proportions. "In some things matter preponderates over form; in other things the reverse

is true. Consequently, there is a scale of beings which passes by continuous gradations from formless matter at the bottom to matterless form at the top. Neither the one extreme nor the other *exists*, for form and matter cannot exist apart from each other. But the intermediate things exist and constitute the universe . . . All things are continually striving to become higher forms. Their attempt to do so is the cause of *Becoming* in the world, the process of the world in general. The motive power of the world-process is the end, the form, the universal. Things strive towards their ends. Hence the form is the impelling force, the energy which makes them move . . . The end was present in the beginning, potentially" (Stace, Hegel, page 24). Although matter is also called non-being by Aristotle it is practically regarded as a being, as real as the form, since otherwise a mere nothing cannot combine with the latter in different proportions, and a thing cannot exist without a combination of matter and form. Hence his idealism is imperfect and illusory. Neither is the scale of values for which he is given credit legitimately deduced. A real variation in values must assume duality of elements. A pure Monism or Idealism can pretend to no real scale. Besides, what is the force that impels the potential form to realize itself in the shape of things? It is quite conceivable that the universal or the form might remain for ever devoid of the impulse to enter into matter, and to start the world-process. A seed does not sprout up of itself. It must wait for the particular conditions. What then conditions the copulation of form with matter?

"Things strive towards their ends." Let them; but they cannot strive before they come to exist, and their existence demands the combination of *form and matter*, as an inexplicable antecedent. As Bergson says, "The main lines of the doctrine that was developed from Plato to Plotinus, passing through Aristotle . . . have nothing accidental, nothing contingent, nothing that must be regarded as a philosopher's fancy. They indicate the vision that a systematic intellect obtains of the universal Becoming when regarding it by means of snapshots, taken at intervals, of its flowing". (*Creative Evolution*, Page 333.) As to the derivation of everything from the first principle to which it aspires to return, Bergson remarks: "But these two conceptions of the divine causality can only be identified together if we bring them, both the one and the other, back to a third, which we hold to be fundamental, and which alone will enable us to understand not only 'why, in what sense, things move in space and time, but

also why there is space and time, why there is movement, why there are things." (*Ibid*, page 341).

In Ethics, neither Plato nor Aristotle has formulated a definite principle, which, like Vedanta, can explain the trend of all human action and reconcile freedom of the will with the fundamental tendencies of man. With Plato, "the highest good is happiness; objectively, it is the Idea of good, which . . . is identified with God. Consequently, the aim of man's actions should be to free himself from the bonds of the flesh, from the trammels of the body in which the soul is confined, and by means of Virtue and Wisdom to become like to God, even in this Life". (Turner's *History of Philosophy*, 115) Aristotle agreed with Plato as to the supreme good of man being happiness, well-being, or welfare. But, how is this well-being to be attained? "Happiness is determined by the end for which man was made, and the end of human existence is that form of good which is peculiar to man, the good which is proper to a rational being." (*Ibid*, 153). The vagueness and the indeterminateness of such aphorisms can hardly fit them to be unfailing guides in the formation of moral judgments. The clear-cut position of Vedanta, on the other hand, is in striking contrast. Man's nature is, says Vedanta, to seek happiness because man spiritually is *Absolute Bliss*. Hence, that is good that makes him realize his true nature which is supreme blessedness beyond want or change.

I shall close my review of Greek Thought, necessarily brief, with one pregnant observation of Bergson's, which is as pertinent to Hegelianism as to the systems of Plato and Aristotle. We come to the natural metaphysic of the human intellect which ancient Greece has given us, "whenever we follow to the end the cinematographical tendency of perception and thought. Our perception and thought begin by substituting for the continuity of evolutionary change a series of unchangeable forms which are, turn by turn, caught 'on the wing,' like the rings at a merry-go-round which the children unhook with their little stick as they are passing. Now, how can the forms be passing, and on what stick are they strung? As the staple forms have been obtained by extracting from change everything that is definite, there is nothing left to characterize the instability on which the forms are laid, but a negative attribute which must be indetermination itself. Such is the first proceeding of our thought; it dissociates each change into two elements—the one stable, definable for each particular case, to wit, the Form; the other indefinable and always the same, Change in general. Forms are all that it is capable of expressing. It is

reduced to taking as understood or is limited to *suggesting* a mobility which, just because it is always unexpressed, is thought to remain in all cases the same. Then comes in a philosophy that holds the dissociation thus effected by thought and language to be legitimate . . . It will have, on the one hand, the system of ideas, logically co-ordinated together, or concentrated into one only, on the other a quasi-nought, the Platonic 'Non-being', or the Aristotelian 'Matter'. But, having cut your cloth, you must sew it. With supra-sensible ideas and an infra-sensible non-being, you now have to reconstruct the sensible world. You can do so only if you postulate a kind of metaphysical necessity in virtue of which the confronting of this all with this Zero *is equivalent* to the affirmation of all the degrees of reality that measure the interval between them." (*Creative Evolution*, pages 344-45.)

CHAPTER XXI: MODERN THOUGHT

DESCARTES

IN the history of European speculation we may pass over several centuries of the Christian era with no great loss, as it comes to have some modern interest only from the time of a thinker like Descartes. It may be generally observed that during this period, notwithstanding an avowed allegiance to Christian Theology, freedom of thought has been strenuously maintained by the founder of every thought-system of any eminence. A great deal has, no doubt, been written in defence of the orthodox doctrines of Sin and Salvation, of Grace and Mercy, of the Trinity and the Incarnation. But we notice a conscious feeling that these dogmas receive no direct support from reason, and widened experience; and notwithstanding Scriptural Revelation so called, man has to pursue with unabated vigour his own intellectual methods of tackling the problems of Evil, Immortality, Freedom, Morality, etc. If it were not for the liberty of thought so claimed, the moral and spiritual condition of Europe to-day would have been fundamentally different. Science and Philosophy thus broke away from the leading-strings of Religion, to the positive advantage of all the three. Their Religion is shedding its unessential crudities, while the other two have learnt to be modest in their pretensions, though fearless in their advance towards Truth.

Descartes started with a method of his own. He found that though he might doubt the existence of a world or God, he could not doubt his own thinking, for to doubt is to think. On this indubitable basis, he rested his belief in his own existence. "I think, therefore I am". *Cogito ergo sum.* This deduction, however seemingly rational or perfect, might strike us as somewhat odd. For, who can doubt his own being, while he is there to doubt it? But Descartes wished to reduce his beliefs to a mathematical, a logical form, to be satisfied about their truth. Much comment has been spent upon the *ergo.* Where did he get his major premiss, Thought implies Being? Descartes seems to have had in his mind the fact of common experience that life, or

existence may be met with, unassociated with thought, as in plants and animals, but no thought can appear where there is no existence presupposed. In other words Existence or Being is a more *extensive* concept than Thought. Hence, Thought proved Being by logical implication. But man's being is to him as much an immediacy as his thinking, and no syllogistic argument is needed to infer one's own existence. To infer an immediacy is an abuse of reason. Proof is sought in relation to things other than self. The self is the indispensable presupposition of every act of reasoning. According to Vedanta, it is a fundamental Reality, as its non-existence is unthinkable.

If Descartes had confined certitude only to thought and the ego, probably his philosophy would have been barren of results. Proceeding from consciousness as his trustworthy point of reference he declared every consistent notion to carry with it proofs of its own truth. He, therefore, inferred the reality of Nature, and of God. God, as a perfect Being, must exist; for the idea of perfection includes existence, and as matter is extension, it must have an existence independent of mind which is thought. Although he thus looked upon mind and matter as two distinct entities, he was the founder of modern Idealism, as his belief in the external world was derived from the ideas of extension, etc., which he attributed to something outside the mind. His is, therefore, an inferred world, not one of immediate perception. His subjectivism paved the way for the Idealism of Berkley. Neither his ethics nor his psychology are of any great interest. We might dismiss him with one remark. His idea of the mind as an entity distinct from the Soul agrees with the Vedantic view, better than the modern notion of the Westerns, to whom Mind, Soul, Spirit, Ego and Consciousness are hardly distinguishable.

SPINOZA

We shall next take up the system of Spinoza, the great Pantheist, the God-intoxicated Jew of rare metaphysical genius. His main doctrine is set forth by Lewes as follows: "The great reality of all existence is substance. Not substance in the gross and popular sense of body or matter, but that which is *substans*—which is standing under all phenomena supporting and giving them reality. What is a phenomenon ?—an appearance, a thing perceived, a state of the perceiving mind. But what originates this perception—what changes the mind from its prior to its present state? *Something*, external and extrinsic, changes it. What is this something? What it *is*, in itself, we can never know: because to

know it would bring it under the forms and conditions of the mind, *i.e.*, would constitute it a phenomenon—unknown, therefore, but not denied—this *ens*—this something *is*; and this Kant calls *Noumenon.* This Spinoza calls substance." (Lewes, *History of Philosophy*, page 421). Descartes had assumed a duality, a God and a real world created by God. Spinoza reduced this duality to an all-embracing unity. "The absolute existence—the substance (call it what you will) is God. From Him all individual concrete existences arise. All that exists, exists in and by God; and can only thus be conceived . . . He recognizes God as the fountain of Life; he sees in the Universe nothing but the manifestation of God; the Finite rests upon the bosom of the Infinite; the inconceivable variety resolves itself into unity. There is but one reality, and that is God." "To live with God—to know God with perfect knowledge, was the highest point of human development and happiness; and to this he consecrated his life." (*Ibid*, page 422.) Now this is perfect Vedanta, and clearly proves the working of the Brahmic instinct with which Spinoza was richly endowed. But the truth stated by him is at bottom a belief, an assumption due to a happy temperament. Still it is not established on the unimpeachable basis of universal reason or experience. God exists. God is the only Reality. Well, but how do you arrive at this conclusion? In life we meet with finite and relative things only. That may beget in us a notion of the Absolute or the Infinite, but cannot by itself prove the actual reality of an entity corresponding to the notion. Spinoza says—and every ontologist who would be consequent must also say it—"that the *Subjective Idea* is the complete and actual image of the *objective fact*, and this not merely relatively—*qua* subject, but also *qua* object." (*Ibid*, page 433). "In other words the mind is a mirror reflecting things as they are." Now this is not true, or readily admissible. "The mind is not a passive mirror reflecting the nature of things, but the partial creator of its own forms—in perception, there is nothing but certain changes in the percipient." (*Ibid*, page 434). Failing to establish Reality as an unquestionable fact, he fails to derive the world from God by any course of cogent reasoning. "The first determination of the Infinite is by means of the attributes *thought* and *extension*. . . The attributes are not ways in which God determines Himself, but rather ways in which we determine Him and consequently the first attempt to find in the one the reason of the difference of the many is a failure". As to the modes, he finally denies that they are real, for all determination is negation; and all limit, non-being. Hence, "the sum of all determinations is equal to nothing. Sub-

stance=God=Nature." (Turner's *History of Philosophy*, pages 469, 471) The inability of Spinoza to explain the appearance of the world, or that of any Monist, or Pantheist, is easily accountable. It is not of the kind that lends itself to explanations that are possible in empirical life. To assume that a whole Appearance must be caused by or related to an Absolute is to predicate something of the Absolute which would be contradictory to its nature. It would cease to be Absolute. Yet, there is the Appearance. Monism is reduced to unenviable straits. If all is one, and the world but a phenomenon, account for the latter. If to explain it you trace it to the One, the latter ceases to be a pure One, but must contain the elements of multiplicity in itself, and then the evolution of the many from the one remains all the same to be explained.

If, on the other hand, to preserve the unrelated character of the one reality, you declare that the Appearance is causeless, then it is clear that it must be another independent entity, and Monism is destroyed. Such insuperable difficulties can be obviated only by the theory of *Maya*. All accounting for events presupposes their *reality* and *plurality*. If this is borne in mind, a good deal of confusion and misconception can be avoided. The rain proceeds from the cloud. Now both the rain and the cloud are realities to us, and belong to a sphere of plurality. The fruit is borne by the tree. The fruit and the tree similarly are real entities, and thrive in a pluralistic world, by supposition. The world *as an appearance*, on the contrary, includes, for the pure Monist or the Pantheist, all that is *not* reality. Hence, it does not belong to the *class* of things in respect of which a demand for explanation can be justly made. For, explanation is reference to something else of the same level of reality. Besides, although we commonly ascribe reality to empirical things, yet when we look upon the whole scheme of things but as an appearance, this appearance as a whole does not belong to a sphere of plurality, is not an element of a scheme of similar entities, and causation is overpassed. As to the Reality which is the substrate of all phenomena, its oneness excludes it from the domain of causation. *Maya* means non-being, unreality. But only those that have established Reality on the basis of the three states can rightly appropriate the doctrine of *Maya*. The Reality put forward by others is but conjectural, and hardly deserves to be bolstered up by *Maya*. Spinoza lighted on Truth, Absolute Truth, by an intuitive impulse. But the intuition was imperfect. It was not that fullness of light that Vedanta provides. His ethics has suffered from the absence of a doctrine like that of *Karma*, and his notion

of final happiness as "a state in which man, attaining the highest unity with God, attains at the same time the highest consciousness of self, so that in this union the distinction between God and creature is not obliterated but rather accentuated" is, in the light of Vedanta, a deplorable backsliding from his metaphysical position of the oneness of Reality. The union referred to is a chimera.

BRITISH IDEALISTS: LOCKE

Meanwhile the Cartesian doctrine produced a powerful reaction in England. Locke declared that the mere self-consistency of an idea or notion cannot necessarily prove the reality of an external source of sensation, or the independent existence of stimulus acting on the sense, a *source* or a stimulus corresponding in kind or quality to the *idea* formed. The sense is only an antechamber, and what reaches it is not yet at the stage at which it can rise to the notice of the understanding. We cannot be said to *know* it—in fact, we have never known it. It is the ore dug out of the mine, a vague, indefinite, amorphous mixture, undistinguishable from mere rock, not yet recognized as an existent thing. It is next passed into an inner chamber, the chamber of reflexion—in which the ore is manipulated and refined into gold, into the sensation we *know*, into perception. Hence, the material supplied by the senses must be passed through the process of *reflexion*, before we can be said to perceive at all. To say that in perception there is an element that did not first enter the antechamber, or that did not afterwards undergo a characteristic process in the inner chamber, is to be unfaithful to fact. Even then, it must not be supposed that a sense is competent to perform its function at the very start. "Sensations are not coeval with the operation of external objects on our organs. Our senses have to be *educated*, that is, to be drawn out, developed. We have to learn to see, to hear, and to touch. Light strikes on the retina, waves of air pulsate on the tympanum; but these are as yet neither sight nor hearing. Many hundred repetitions are necessary before what we call a sensation (*i.e.*, a distinct feeling corresponding to that which the object will always produce upon the developed sense) can be produced. Many sensations are necessary to produce a perception: a perception is a cluster of sensations." (*History of Philosophy* by Lewes, page 466). The impressions produced by objects on the senses are vague at first and become definite by repetition. Locke says, "In time the mind comes to reflect on its own operations about the ideas got by sensation, and thereby stores itself with a new set of ideas

which I call ideas of reflection. Thus, the first capacity of the human intellect is that the mind is fitted to receive the impressions made on it, either through the senses by outward objects, or by its own operations when it reflects on them."

So in all our knowledge we *never* rise "one jot beyond those ideas which sense or reflection have offered for its (mind's) contemplation". "When the understanding is once stored with these simple ideas, it has the power to repeat, compare, and unite them, even to an almost infinite variety, and so can make at pleasure new complex ideas." (*Ibid*, page 467).

Locke further said that the secondary qualities of bodies are not copies or resemblances of something answering to them in the bodies. "There is nothing like our ideas existing in the bodies themselves. They are, in the bodies we denominate from them, only a power to produce those sensations in us." (*Ibid*, page 468). He might have extended the application of his principles to the primary qualities also. For all qualities are *effects*, merely, and not copies. Only while the secondary are variable, the primary are invariable. Even this invariability is, as Lewes says, "an indissoluble association in our mind", and is no standard of reality.

As regards causality, Locke says that our knowledge is subjective only. "Though causes work steadily, and effects constantly flow from them, yet their connexions and dependencies being not discoverable in our ideas, we can have but an experimental knowledge of them." "The mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of ideas it has of them." This is final. If *ideas* are all we *can* know immediately, the march to reality behind the ideas to the so-called "things" is brought to a sudden inevitable stop within the region of positive knowledge. Imagination is free to assume (Realism) or deny it (Idealism). That the condition of man is such as has been determined by a superior Being, and that man's incapacity to know more should be no reason to set limits to His power or wisdom, are the observations of a pious mind which cannot materially affect the scientific value of the conclusion to which Locke's speculation drives us, namely, that all knowledge being of the nature of ideas, we cannot legitimately claim to know anything beyond them, either God or Nature. If it is objected that this reduces Life to the conception of a long dream, Locke would answer: "Yes. But even then the thinker and the critic being equally involved in the dream, their mutual relations remain the same as if the condition was one of waking." Locke decidedly

favoured Idealism, and by his method of reasoning made scepticism possible.

BERKLEY AND HUME

" A beautiful-minded Berkley, " and a " ruthless Hume " followed. The former demolished an external substrate of qualities—matter, and the latter, an internal substrate of feelings—mind. Berkley argued, " All that we know of is only our own mind and its states or ideas. There is no doubt a law that regulates their concomitance and succession, a law for which we feel we are not responsible. In that case, the only sensible view can be that it proceeds from an omniscient mind—namely God. At all events, an entity different in kind from a mind, is unthinkable and unreal. What we call things are but our ideas. They are real in so far as they are percepts. There is nothing in the 'thing' which is not reducible to an idea; and a bundle of ideas—a 'thing'—cannot transcend the nature of 'ideas', cannot become, by any kind of reasoning, other than what it is perceived to be. A something behind the percept has either qualities or not. In the former case, it is akin to our percept and no more. In the latter, it is unimaginable, and therefore unreal; for, what is imaginable is only what can be perceived or conceived as a sum of qualities or sensations." True, said Hume. But, if so, what is the secure basis on which mind itself stands? We are immediately made aware of feelings, volitions, and cognitions—of pleasure and pain; of love and hatred, of sound and colour, but we can never come across the supposed substrate of feelings—the mind. It is as much a phantom haunting an unreflective man, as *matter* apart from sensation. *But these are substances.* What is a substance? A support of attributes? What is a support again? You cannot describe it. For as a support of attributes, it has none. Still, there is movement, change, causality. What is causality but an observed sequence? No substrate is *seen* to persist. There is neither mind, nor matter, all is idea, changing every moment. No substance, no reality. Hume arrived at the extreme end of cold and comfortless scepticism maintaining "that there is no permanent, immutable element in the world of our experience and that there is no valid principle which can justify metaphysical speculation concerning the world beyond our experience." It looked for the time being as if Europe could make no advance in speculation.

Locke ruled out the possibility of knowing external things, Berkley denied their existence and Hume extended the

negation to Mind. Locke said, we cannot know things but only ideas, but he did not deny their existence. Berkley said, we cannot know them, because they are only constructions of the human mind. They do not really exist. Hume took the next step and declared that he could find no reason to believe in substrates—either a substrate for thoughts, the mind, or a substrate for sensations, matter. Mind and Matter were alike banished from the land of the living. All is appearance, phenomenon. Religion, Ethics and Philosophy were grounded in idle beliefs, habits of mind, social conventions. Truth and Reality were illusions. Scepticism could go no further, and Pan-Phenomenalism threatened to eclipse the metaphysical genius of Europe.

KANT

The importance of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* can be appreciated only by those who can conceive to what depths European metaphysics must have fallen, through the prevalence of the sceptical views of Hume, but for the timely appearance of the "*Critique*" which saved the speculative soul of the West. The European mind should have sunk into gross superstition, or dogmatic fanaticism, had not her natural love of freedom from all bonds—physical or intellectual—and her irrepressible, rational instincts prevented her from a complete spiritual shipwreck.

To Vedanta, the spread of idealism and scepticism, or the birth of a Kant, is not an accident. The advance of individual or national minds is under the direction of the same World-Spirit which is ceaselessly working for self-expression and self-knowledge—knowledge of its own transcendental nature. Under its influence, men all over the world, shall be ever musing and reflecting, till the Higher Truth shines in every individual soul. *Dogmas* must perish, *idealism* must lead to *Scepticism* and these shells must break before the kernel of Truth can appear. Such is the process of spiritual growth.

The human mind which naively believes in the reality of appearances must pass through a discipline before it can assess them at their true worth or value. It must learn to distinguish between conditional and unconditional truths. It must rise above a selfish and complacent trust in the false values of life's trivialities. As Schopenhauer says, "He to whom men and all things have not at times appeared as mere phantoms or illusions has no capacity for philosophy." "It seems natural," he remarks, "to desire to remodel or vitalise this imperfect world of sense and everyday reality, just because so much of it is phenomenal and nuga-

tory and illusory." (Caldwell on Schopenhauer, page 88). For a contemplative mind, scepticism, disbelief in all theory and tradition, and honest doubt are the precursors, the auspicious harbingers of the dawn of enlightenment.

What is to become of man, what shall be his destiny, if there should be no certitude accorded to all knowledge? This set Kant thinking, and he undertook a scientific examination of the nature and powers of the mind, and of the process of knowledge. He discovered that among the elements of cognition there are some that are constant and invariable, and that time and space as well as causality are *a priori* forms of perception, which we cannot transcend, but which are not derived from experience, being the pre-requisite conditions of it. The value of this discovery it is impossible to overrate. Errors in speculation are universally due to an ignorance of this rudimentary fact. The intellect cannot overpass its own limits. Time, etc., supply the atmosphere in which alone it can exercise its wings—it cannot fly beyond, for they are the conditions of its flight. Heaven and Hell, God and His creation, are all *empirical* conceptions. Plurality, individuality, change and development, what can they connote to a mind, which is not fettered by Time, Space and Causation—the empirical triad? It is not right to say that we know nothing for certain. We know *this* for certain: that the mind is an organism that has its own invariable laws of working and though we cannot ever hope to rise to a knowledge of the Thing-in-itself, the very fact that cognitions are made possible, prove the existence of "Things-in-themselves," which, passing through the intellect and obeying its laws, transform themselves into the manifold world of our experience.

Before Kant, Space and Time were regarded as the fundamental framework of objective existence, and a reality could be conceived only as extended in space and persisting in Time. Consciousness was, of course, excepted from liability to the laws of Space, but is to this day conceived as subject to those of Time. Even God suffered from this primary human illusion. As a person though He was not limited to the same extent as ourselves, He was supposed to walk and move, and He rose superior to Time, only by the eternality of His existence. To suggest that He was not bound by Space, He was imagined to be omnipresent; and to realize His independence of causality, He was looked upon as the Creative Cause of All, while He Himself owed his existence to none else. Heaven was a golden world, eternally lit up by the lustre of God's presence, while Hell was a region of liquid fire ever burning with

sulphur, and bitumen unconsumed. The retraction of external reality from time and space exposed the unsubstantiality of such phantasies, and although the deep-rooted old beliefs are still seen insensibly to influence the speculations of the Moderns, yet the discovery by Kant of the apriority of these mental forms has set the mind in quest of Truth on a new and a more hopeful track altogether unknown to the Ancients. Even in India, the tyrannical sway of time and space on the speculative mind has been allowed to prevail unresisted. Much of the controversial chaff, whose consumption has emaciated the understanding and weakened the judgment of philosophical enquirers, has been engendered by that common delusion that invested the two intellectual functions with the independence of real entities. Kant, for the first time in the history of uropean thought, pointed out that they were simply ' pure intuitions '. Vedanta, however, had anticipated Kant, and long before Philosophy started on her career in the West, a great metaphysical harvest had been gathered in, enough to feed the spiritual cravings of man.

To decide whether Truth can be known, and whether we possess adequate means of knowledge, Kant undertook what he called the Critique of Pure Reason, and an examination of knowledge to detect and separate the *a priori* elements in it, subjective and objective. The mind and the external world stand face to face, and for a knowledge of the latter to arise in the former, what are the necessary conditions? First, there must be sensibility on the part of the senses or the off-shoots of the mind. They must be able to react to the material furnished them from the outside, and space is a form of that reaction. Hence, space does not come from experience but conditions it. Similarly, time is the form of our sensibility—internal and external. "Our senses in contact with the external world are affected by objects in a certain determinate manner. The result is a representation in reference to the object represented, an intuition in reference to the affection itself. These intuitions are moulded by the understanding into conceptions; the sensation is converted into thought" (Lewes, page 555). With this view of knowledge obtained through perception, Kant was forced to look upon it as empirical. He did not deny the existence of the external world, but he denied that we can know it *per se*. "It appears to us; only the appearance therefore can be known, it must ever remain unknown, because, before being known, it must appear to us, *i.e.*, come under the conditions of our sensibility and be invested with the forms of space and time, and come under the conditions of our understanding and be invested with the categorical forms." (*Ibid*, page 558).

Kant also realized that knowledge meant unification. "The representations are unified by the application of the *a priori* forms of space and time; the intuitions resulting from this application are in turn unified by the determining *schema*, which gives reality to the highest unifying form, namely, the category. Finally, above all these is the unity of consciousness. At the same time he did not hesitate to declare that man can know nothing beyond "Phenomenon" or "Appearance." (Turner, page 536). "As nothing can be an object of experience except the phenomenon, it follows that the understanding can never go beyond the limits of sensibility. As phenomena are nothing but representations, the understanding refers them to a something as the object of our sensuous intuition. This means a something equal to X, of which we do not, nay, cannot know anything." This something is the noumenon, the Thing-in-itself. For the steps in reasoning that led Kant to determine the apriority of time, space and causality, refer to his *Critique of Pure Reason* and to page 209 of this book, and pages 24-54 of Deussen's *Elements of Metaphysics.*

The conclusions at which Kant arrived in his *Critique of Pure Reason* were exactly opposite to those that he meant to establish. He started with the idea of refuting Hume's scepticism which was so disconcerting by its denial of certitude to human knowledge, a denial by which God, Freedom, and Immortality, the cherished hopes and convictions of Religion, could find no place in philosophy. His transcendental criticism tended only to confirm that scepticism. All is Appearance, and Reality unknowable. Aghast at such a result which ran counter to his own beliefs and predilections, Kant attempted to undo the effects of his own speculation by advancing the superior claims of Practical Reason in active life. He asserted the primacy of the moral law in his *Critique of Practical Reason.* "The starry Heaven above us and the moral law within us," he said, "are the only objects worthy of admiration. Consciousness tells me that I *ought* to perform certain actions, and a little thought suffices to convince me that the *oughtness* is *universal* and *necessary.*" The Moral Law is founded on necessity and universality, not on pleasure, not on happiness, not on moral sense, not on perfection of Self. The Categorical Imperative is the characteristic expression of the Moral Law which implies freedom of the will and postulates the existence of God as well as the immortality of the soul. Thus, Practical Reason restored what Pure Reason had taken away. But which of these ought we to believe? Kant claimed supremacy for Practical Reason. For, "Faith," he said, "is a rational conviction based on the sense of duty, and is not less but rather

more valid than the conviction based on theoretical knowledge." (Turner, page 544).

The declarations of Kant, however, have not remained unchallenged. His two criteria of "necessity" and "universality" have not been universally accepted as sufficient to prove the intuitive nature of time and space. Hamilton and Spencer, among others, disputed the truth of the assertion, and the realists in general will not acknowledge it. The fact is, that though Kant's genius alone enabled him to light upon the truth, no mere speculation, however supported by reason, can satisfy the soul. A fact to be admitted by all must be shown to be part and parcel of the life of the soul. Vedanta can find nothing wrong in Kant's views, and cordially endorses his conclusions, for they are her own. But she can point to Life itself for verification, and thus compel universal acquiescence in its dicta. Time and space as well as causality are the characteristic features of waking and dream, the active expressions of Life, while they disappear altogether in sleep. If they were external realities, independent of mind, they should be found to connect the three states with one another, like any three events or places in waking. Besides, while the time-series of waking is felt to be one, those of dreams are found to be infinite. If time were an objective reality, it could not admit of such variations in the speed of its flight, as to make dream a perfect puzzle and the self-identity of time impossible. The identification of Pure Consciousness of sleep as the highest Reality has enabled the Vedantins to conceive God as *beyond* time, etc., while the view limited to waking compels Him to be regarded only as persisting eternally *in* time—which is altogether an empirical concept. Kant, like the Hindu seers of old, helped men to rise to transcendentalism in thought, and like them he might also have arrived at the Vedantic Truth, if his penetrative and clear vision had been likewise directed to all the manifestations of life in its entirety. As it is, he regarded God, the soul and the world as but "the three ideas of Reason, the laws of its operation and the pure forms of its existence. They are to it what space and time are to sensibility, and what the categories are to understanding. But these ideas are simply regulative; they operate on conceptions as the understanding operates upon sensations; they are discursive, not intuitive; they are never face to face with their objects. Hence, Reason is powerless when employed on matters beyond the sphere of understanding; it can draw nothing but false deceptive conclusions. If it attempts to operate beyond its sphere—if it attempts to solve the question raised respecting God and the world

—it falls into endless contradictions (Lewes, page 557). God as the source of the world and of the ego is the highest unity of all.

In all systems of thought, the most vexing question has been, what is the place given to the world and God? By its explanation relating to them is a system judged. Now Kant's position is far from definite in this respect. He believes in God, but God to him is unknowable. He believes in a real external world, but we shall never know it *per se.* The soul is immortal because Moral Law requires it. Thus the unknowability of God or the Thing-in-itself involves him in a hopeless dualism. If the percept is not the real world, and if God although He exist is beyond our understanding, what is it that veils Reality from man? Vedanta replies, *Maya.*

FICHTE

The successors of Kant endeavoured to heal the dualism implied in an unknown and unknowable Thing-in-itself. Fichte was actuated by one object and that was to construct a science out of consciousness and to found a system of morals on it. As certitude can be claimed only for the *a priori* elements of thought, he undertook to construct all knowledge *a priori.* Kant had postulated non-ego as an independent reality. Fichte denied it. All that we know is derived from ourselves; our own consciousness and even the idea of a non-ego is a product of it. The necessity felt for a non-ego is a necessity created by the ego, which then creates what it wants. Ideas alone are given in consciousness which is not competent to give anything else. The ego is ever active. Its activity makes it assume an external cause for itself in the shape of a substance which is but a mental synthesis of accidents. Consciousness reveals my freedom. It is not my action merely, " but the free determination of my will to obey the voice of conscience that decides all my worth." (Lewes, page 589). Fichte laid stress on the egoistic element of Reality and derived the non-ego from its activity. The ego causes the non-ego to *be* " necessarily and unconsciously ". For the existence of the ego depends on its consciousness, and to be conscious of self is at the same time to be conscious of non-self. Hence, self and non-self are given in the same act of consciousness and are equally real for the same reason. If dualism be accepted, scepticism stares us in the face. For matter can be never known *per se,* and our knowledge must be confined to phenomena.

Fichte was a vigorous and fearless thinker, yet his Pure

Idealism with the ego as the only Reality did not furnish a satisfactory solution of the non-ego, or the world, and to this extent the test of philosophic validity remains unsatisfied. The ego is not conscious of having given birth to the non-ego, and to say that consciousness of self necessitates consciousness of non-self is to presuppose the dualism, which has to be explained. And really it cannot be otherwise. We live in a dual world, and however far we might look back, we cannot get rid of the duality which is concomitant with the activity of the ego. This radical flaw vitiates the view of Hegel also. He traces similarly the object and the subject to a self-consciousness, but forgets that self-consciousness is impossible except for a mind accustomed to deal with objects, and the concept of the higher unity is a delusion unless it is established in a fact of life. Thus the problem of the world remains unsolved. *Maya* encounters champion after champion, illustrious minds, but stands unvanquished in the field. Fichte was right when he estimated the worth of a man by his power to bend his will to the mandates of conscience. But what is the ultimate significance of morality?

SCHELLING

A tendency towards pantheism and mysticism became now marked among the western thinkers. Schelling systematized pantheism. He believed in a special faculty with which some were endowed. He called it the Intellectual Intuition. The identity of the subject and object could be realized only by those that possessed it. One that lacked it deserved pity. Philosophy was not meant for him.

Schelling, however, would not go as far as Fichte in deriving the non-ego from the ego. That would be doing violence to commonsense. The reality of both must, therefore, be admitted. Their unification must be sought in a higher power. They were identified in the Absolute. The Absolute manifested itself as Nature and Mind. The object is no doubt, as asserted by Fichte, the arrested activity of the ego. But the ego cannot by its own force produce the non-ego. "It is the Universal Nature which works within us, and which produces from out of us. It is Universal Nature which here in us is conscious of itself. Men are but the innumerable individual eyes with which the Infinite World-Spirit beholds himself." The ego is but the act by which it becomes an object to itself. Thus consciousness is the objectivity of the ego. Similarly, the Absolute to be conscious of Himself must realize

Himself objectively. "The blind and unconscious products of Nature are nothing but unsuccessful attempts of Nature to make itself an object." Nature returns into itself through human Reason and reveals its identity with subject and object. This Reason is the *Indifference Point.* In the Absolute all difference is lost in indifference. "Idealism is one-sided. God is neither Ideal, nor Real—neither Mind nor Nature—but both". But the reality of the subject and the object is only phenomenal and Reason has to transcend consciousness to know the Absolute. For consciousness is incompetent to comprehend it. "As Knowledge and Being are identical, to know the Infinite we must be the Infinite, *i.e.*, must lose our individuality in the universal." (Lewes, Page 609).

The reader may have noticed some points of resemblance between the system of Schelling and Vedanta. But the resemblance is superficial. The identity of the individual self with the Absolute, according to Vedanta, is not the identity of two distincts. The ego is the Infinite and the non-ego is that likewise. The unity of Existence or Reality admits of no qualification, no whittling down, but the empirical manifold is due to a view through the intellect which is an organ of plurality. Schelling's system propounds no doctrines like those of *Karma* or of *Rebirth,* which are vital to exoteric Vedanta. It throws no light on the mysteries of Life's states: Sleep, Dream, or Death. And its chief defect consists in its stressing the need of the possession of a special faculty known as the Intellectual Intuition. Special Intuitions and immediate perceptions are evidences of a want of intellectual balance. Truth must be as accessible to the common man and as much within his experience as Life itself. Ecstasy on the other hand is a state of *feeling* in which distinctions are lost. It is not *knowledge,* which is conscious apprehension of Truth.

CHAPTER XXII: MODERN THOUGHT: HEGEL

HEGEL AND SCHOPENHAUER

HEGEL is regarded as the greatest of Kant's successors and his system the highest that any human brain has produced. For subtlety and speculative boldness, it is unequalled. It wins its triumph by *Reason*, or the principle of the identity of opposites. The object is distinct from the subject, yet identical with it. Hitherto, men were puzzled as to whether the two elements of knowledge should be considered as independent and real (dualism), or whether the one ought to be derived from the other (idealism, materialism). Hegel by a *coup de main* took the bull by the horns and declared that it was a mistake to suppose that a thing was only self-identical, leading thereby to a speculative *impasse*. Every thing, like every concept, contained its own negation, was its own negation, so that it would be as correct to say that A equals not-A, as to say that A equals A. Being and Non-Being are identical. For, when all the determinations of a thing are abstracted from, it can be with equal reason regarded as Being or Non-Being. A thing is made up of its determinations, concepts, universals, thoughts. Being is, therefore, identical with Knowing. The world has its logical being in a system of universals, of categories, or reason. It is the Absolute Idea, the identity in difference of subject and object. The Universe is Mind, not your mind or my mind, or even God's Mind, but objective Mind. Such is a brief description of the main doctrines of Hegelianism.

Hegel's system is Monism, but with him Reality is not an abstract but a concrete One. The Eleatics, the Hindus and Spinoza are said to have started with an abstract One and hence failed to deduce the world from it, and were obliged to treat it as an illusion, *Maya* or a Nullity. His method is dialectic. A universal is not necessarily empty. It may carry its own negation or opposite with it and we can deduce a higher entity by a combination of both. Thus, Being contains Non-Being. By combining both, we arrive at *Becoming*, which is a higher category. Becoming is similarly treated as the next thesis, from which an antithesis is developed, and

by combining the thesis and the antithesis, a new category is obtained, and so on, till we reach the highest category, the Absolute Idea. From the Idea, Nature is deduced, and by a synthesis of these two, we get to the Absolute Spirit which is the end and the consummation of the world-process. Thus the Absolute Spirit is the Absolute Idea which has passed from the sphere of pure thought into actual existence. "Philosophy is the existence of the Idea." The philosophic spirit is "the attainment of the end and purpose of the world-process." "The external Idea, in full fruition of its essence, eternally sets itself to work, engenders and enjoys itself as absolute mind (spirit)." (Stace, page 518).

In tracing the world to a first principle it is rightly maintained that this principle should not be an individual thing which in its turn craves an explanation, and that, therefore, the most correct principle can be Reason alone. In that case, with what justification can the principle be assumed as a concrete One, rather than an Abstract One? It is argued that if the first One were altogether empty, how could we deduce the world from it, except as a make-believe? How can we get from the One what was not in it? Well, if so, where is the fun in assuming the world as implicitly contained in the One, and then like a juggler drawing out sheath after sheath from it? Is this Monism? If organic unity is claimed, it always presupposes a manifold in a subtle condition, and in no case will the multiplicity have been accounted for. Besides, the impotence to deduce multiplicity from an abstract unity is an intellectual impotence. Life laughs at it. Consciousness can make an object of itself, though it contains no object.

Nevertheless, let us grant that the Dialectic method has a superiority over the doctrine of *Maya*, and see how far it enables Hegel to derive the world from the Idea. His philosophy of Nature is universally looked upon as the most unsatisfactory. It breaks down completely at the most critical point. Declaring Nature as the opposite of the Idea and therefore as irrational and unreal, he thinks he has got over the difficulty of having to deduce it from the first principle. But the validity of the principle is tested by its power to explain the world. Hegel's pretentious claims end in signal failure. For to him also, as to the Hindu, Nature is irrational and unreal—is *Maya*.

Neither can we find that his philosophy of Spirit is of any high merit. His treatment of Ethics, of Æsthetics, of Religion, of

man's life and destiny, does not exhibit any of that rational basis on which he professes to build up his entire system. What is the Good? The coincidence of the individual will with the universal. Well, it might be the result of accident or of voluntary effort. But, why should one seek the Good? If it is rational, why should the majority of mankind be indifferent and even antagonistic to it? What is Right? Why should it be so? What is the impulse in man that inclines him to the Good and the Righteous? In vain do we look for rational answers to these eternal questions of the human mind. In the next place, Beauty is described as the appearance of the Idea through the sensory-world. We know that "a thing of Beauty is a joy for ever." Why should the appearance of the Idea make the thing *beautiful*, a source of eternal delight? His explanation of the æsthetic feeling is far from adequate.

As to religion, no one will be satisfied with his triad: the Universal (God) going out into the particular (Man) to become the individual (The Church). To reduce Heaven and Hell, Sin and Virtue, Bliss and Immortality, Worship and Grace, Life and all its trials and tribulations, and finally God Himself, to a series of Universals with inexhaustible fecundity, is the cruellest satire on human feelings and aspirations. The logical severity with which the categories are deduced, gives the system a rational look, but it is a delusion. There are pitfalls throughout, and the very first step by which Hegel proves Being to be identical with Non-Being takes one's breath away by its audacity. A equals A, A equals Not-A. One would just ask whether all the four A's here are identical or different. To prove Hegel's point they must be assumed to be identical. If they *are* identical, how is their opposition to themselves to be expressed or conceived? If A is absolutely A, how is it also absolutely Not-A? How can both the affirmation and negation be equally absolute at the same time? And we have already seen that to accept even such a revolting proposition brings in no corresponding good. We should be only ringing in the rule of chaos.

There is a straightforwardness in the Vedantin which might find greater appreciation and imitation. In dealing with the world as a thing *apart* from the Brahman or the Reality, he firmly declares it to be *Maya*, unreality, illusion. Stace, a fervent and admirable exponent of Hegel, observes: "The writers of Upanishads being unable to explain why the One differentiates itself into the many took refuge in metaphors. As the sparks from the substantial fire, so all finite beings issue forth from the One. But this

explains nothing. The problem is how the actual world is to be explained from that Ultimate Reality" (Pages 170-171, *Greek Thought.*) Stace does not seem to know that the Upanishads are using such figures as are strictly justified by actual experience and not such as are dictated by fancy. They refer to the oneness universally experienced in sleep and the manifoldness of waking. Certainly, the change is best compared to the sparks proceeding from a burning fire. Considering the relation of the individual souls to Brahman (God) which is that of identity, the comparison is perfect. Stace 'claims greater rationality for Hegel's system which, he maintains, explains with success the issue of the many from the One, without reducing the former to a mere nullity. Yet, this promise is belied later. On page 184 (*Greek Thought*) we read: "Our Senses make us aware of many individual horses. Our intellect gives us the concept of the horse in general. If the latter is the sole truth, the former must be false. The objects of sensations have no true reality. What has reality is the idea of the horse in general." Is this to preserve the reality of the world intact, and explain its origination from Reality or God? Instead of the open distinction between Reality and unreality, the fashion is to discriminate between existence and reality. What presents itself to the sense, a tree for example, exists, but is not real; what is not so perceived—quality for example—is real. In other words, individual things whether external (a tree), or internal (a feeling) are unreal, while universals, concepts alone, are real. The reason furnished is unconvincing. The tree deprived of its determinations, universals, becomes reduced to nothing. Hence, it depends for its existence on the universals. It is unreal, while they are real. But are the universals independent of the tree? Can we take them apart except mentally? No, but stlll they must be conceded real being. They are real. Yet, they are not real as a subjective concept, which is an event in time, in the stream of consciousness. They are real as objective concepts. As such they are independent of every individual mind. They are the world which is thought objective. Obviously, all individual things—all immediate presentations to consciousness are unreal.

But what is meant by objective concepts? If we cannot know them, how can we assume them? The answer given is, they are identical with subjective concepts and as these we know them. Hence, our knowledge of the categories is direct. If the categories, as concepts, are identical with the subjective concepts, how is their objective reality to be established at the same time? To say that the categories are not the concepts of your mind or my mind, or

of any individual mind, but objective concepts, beyond time and eternal, is to hide ignorance behind a cloud of words. They are simply abstractions, and can have no reality apart from the mind that conceived them. Similarly, an objective mind is an abstraction of my mind and can have no real being apart from it. Objective thought and objective mind should be dismissed as veritable myths of fancy. Vedanta declares, on the unimpeachable authority of experience, the unity of the highest Reality, and the *Mayic* nature of the world divorced from it. Hegel admits the unreality of everything presented immediately to consciousness—a sensuous object, a volition, or a subjective concept—but claims reality only to the *objective concept*, which is timeless, which has no existence, and which is not my concept, though this is identical with it. The truth is, this objective reason is a mere assumption, and while it is taken to be real, all the rest is declared to be unreal. How does Hegel differ from Vedanta? Brahman is established from an entire study of Life and its three manifestations; Hegel's Absolute Idea or Absolute Mind is a mere hypothesis, a ghost of fancy—a spectral king of "bloodless categories."

If, now, the objective categories are timeless and have only logical being, how do they enter the region of existence, of Time and Place? This is the crux. How does Hegel answer? Nature, the sphere of Time and Change, is irrational, and hence unreal. We cannot, therefore, rationally deduce it from the Idea. This is a pitiable collapse, after such a preliminary flourish. Was not his Dialectic made possible by deducing Nothing from Being, which was his greatest feat, and by a synthesis of both? What is the net result of the pains taken, if, like Plato's Ideas, Hegel's Categories should not be able to effect their entrance into the sensuous world? Failing to deduce Nature from the Idea, how is the deduction of Spirit or Mind possible which demands a synthesis of them both?

The doctrine of *Maya* is often held in superior contempt. What do the successive failures of thinkers possessing the highest genius for speculation to explain the world indicate? Surely, it is the illusion of illusions to go about a task without ascertaining its nature and to believe in having accomplished it, when like the labour of Sisyphus, it has to be commenced over again. The Reality is the Absolute. The world is characterized by *Maya*, or the principle of contradictions. To relate the two is to fall into her net, and be caught in its meshes, without hope of escape.

And what, according to Hegel, is Reality? Independent Being.

The Universal is independent and therefore real. A thing, a constituent of the world, depends for its existence on the universals, and is therefore unreal, though a presentational immediacy. But is not a Universal also dependent on the thing? Can it have being apart from things? What is the ground on which the statement rests, that the Universal, the Idea, is independent? Stace can vouchsafe no better answer than this: "We cannot suppose that universals, on which the very existence of things depend, are nothing, have no being of any sort. We must admit, then, that universals have being". (page 19, *Philosophy of Hegel*). To be the principle of the world, they must be real, and must explain themselves. But on page 200 we find: "The Indian describes the world as *Maya*, mere nothing, non-entity. For Hegel, the world is likewise appearance, but the appearance is the essence, *i.e.*, it is not less essential than the essence itself," and again on page 212: "The external world is certainly appearance, phenomenon. But it is not a nullity. It is just as essential to reality as essence is. Were it not so, it would be impossible to understand why the essence (Brahman, Being, etc.) should ever manifest itself. It does so because it *must*, because it is essential to its own reality that it should do so, because without its manifestation it would itself be unreal. Reality, then, or actuality, is not the essence alone, nor is it the manifestation alone, but it is the *essence which manifests itself.*" Now, if Reality cannot help manifesting itself, if the Idea *must* appear as the world, how can its being be independent, and without independence how can it be real? It cannot be real unless it manifests itself, but it cannot be real, if it *must* manifest itself. Both the world and its principle are reduced to the condition of absolute mutual dependence, and, in Stace's own words, dependence is the sign of unreality. His passion to display the superiority of the Hegelian doctrine, the obsession of the modern mind with the notion of the reality of the practical world—the sphere of his daily triumphs and joys, the absence of a clear idea of what constitutes reality, has made Mr. Stace so hopelessly contradictory. It is not true that to the Hindu the world is a mere nullity. It is the sphere of probation, of purification through experience, of self-expression, and of self-realisation, to the spirit. If, after all, this is not accepted as the highest Reality, how can a cultured soul blunder over the truth? The fact is, Stace has not arrived at a correct definition of Reality.

Vedanta cannot accept his definition. Independency of being, though based on better evidence than what is furnished in behalf

of the Universal, cannot necessarily imply reality. Independence is a notion, and such notions may visit the human mind in dreams as well as in waking. I behold a parrot in a dream. It is a congeries of universals. Hence, going on Stace's principle, I conclude at the time that the thing, the parrot, is unreal, but the universals of which it is made up are real. The parrot has only existence but the universals have real being. I wake to laugh at the illusion of it all. The notion of the independence of the dream-universal could not endow it with real being. This imperfection is inseparable from all partial views of Life, views confined to the waking experience alone. The distinction between *existence* and *reality* made by Stace collapses in dream-life. If it is urged that this objection is invalid, as no one takes dream-experience seriously, the answer is, so much the worse for a system of thought. Besides, the defence is particularly ill available for Hegel to whom All is Idea, Thought. For dream-life is as much within the region of thought as waking, and if Hegel's procedure is right, dream-life must be as rationally ordered as the other. But it is opposed to universal experience. Moreover, a definition of waking is as hard to light upon, as that of reality. "Why, this is waking", one might impatiently exclaim. Yes, but that does not help us to define the state in definite terms. In dream, the feeling is identical, "this is waking," and no proof proceeds beyond the meagre 'this' in both cases.

Again, what is the world, according to Hegel, which is to be explained? Does the concept include subject and object? If so, it must leave out the consciousness in which the concept appears, and suffer in its comprehensiveness; and in fact, no idea can be free from this defect so long as the view-point is restricted to waking. If the subject is excluded, then evidently, *the world-concept* does not represent the sum of reality.

Again, in explaining the Absolute Idea (page 292, *Philosophy of Hegel*) Stace declares it to be "the absolute identity in difference of subject and object". "The subject instead of having the object as something alien and outside it, now recognizes that the object is itself. Mind or the subject duplicates itself, puts itself forth as its own object in the form of an external world, and in contemplating that world contemplates itself. It is mind which knows itself to be all reality. It is thus the thought of thought, thought which thinks, not an alien object but only itself." This is to treat mind or the subject as if it were an object, and put both subject and object on an empirical footing of equality. Subjectivity can only be viewed as an empirical contingency of Reality which,

as the substrate of subject and object, cannot be properly treated as subject or object, and the Hegelian deduction of one category after another were impossible without playing false to the genuine nature of Reality which resists all attempts to objectify it. The inherent impossibility to treat Reality, Brahman, as an object, is what forced the Vedantin, in order to be faithful to Truth, to acknowledge a secondary principle of illusion and of contradiction, *Maya* (unreality). Side by side with Reality, it is a mere nothing. But as descriptive of the character of the empirical world, its name is the most significant. For every attempt to trace the development of empirical *multiplicity* from the transcendental *unity* has ended in despair and Hegel's is not an exception. People, under the power of *Maya*, forget that to draw out anything from consciousness they have to do violence to its nature, and convert it into an object first, when all the while it remains as the imperturbable witness of their fruitless cogitations. A Hegelian might turn round and ask, "Is not all Monism sailing in the same boat, Vedanta as well as the rest? Should not subject and object be both reduced to unity, to identity? How has Hegel suffered for want of a doctrine like that of *Maya*?" Vedanta admits that Monism reduces all existence to a single principle. Its *one*, however, is neither an abstract nor a concrete one. 'Abstract' and 'concrete' savour of duality. It is absolute and cannot be conceived to have relations with the world which is its manifestation. It transcends the subject and the object and is immediately realized only as Pure Consciousness. It is eternally beyond the reach of change and time, and is assumed to manifest itself only when associated with *Maya*. In the exoteric view, Brahman is both changeless and changing, and all our speculation with its self-contradictions and inconsistencies, can have a bearing only on the empirical side, not on the transcendental side of Reality. Vedanta teems with doctrines that are often fanciful and dogmatic but they do not and indeed cannot touch its central Truth which by its immediacy is ever secure.

Further, the distinction that Stace makes between existence and reality is not clear. Existence seems to be euphemism for unreality. A thing exists but is not real. The universals do not exist but have real being. The unreality of a thing is due to its dependence on the universals. May we not question whether mere dependence should necessarily imply unreality? Stace's illustration of a shadow does not exhaust all cases of dependence. My writing depends on the pen. Is my writing unreal therefore? My strength depends on the food I

take. Is my strength unreal? These are obvious instances of the falsity of his principle, and of the regrettable carelessness with which philosophical truths are often elucidated. In the next place, according to Stace, there need not be anything unreal. From Being to the Absolute Idea, from the Idea to the Absolute Spirit and again from the Absolute Spirit to Pure Being, everything is logically deduced, and nothing is lost. The world in its entirety, the categories, Nature and Mind, are all included in "the philosophical circle which returns into itself." Where is then room for unreality? Why should individual things be unreal, when their existence can be logically explained? It is opposed to the principle of Hegel that what is rational is real. Moreover, Stace disagrees with Hegel when he declares that Nature is undeducible, since on account of its contingency and irrationality, it is an absolute unreality. Stace says: "But since it exists, and since it is not deduced, not derived from thought, it has, therefore, an independent being of its own. It is an absolute reality. (page 310, *Philosophy of Hegel*). It appears, therefore, that according to Stace, a thing is real when it is not deduced from thought, when it is irrational. It is unreal when it is so deducible, when it is proved to be rational. Why rationality any more than dependence should lead to unreality is not evident, especially in the face of Hegel's statement that Nature is unreal because of its irrationality.

The problem of evil is the toughest in philosophy. Here is the Hegelian pronouncement on its nature. "Some things which exist, such as evil, are not rational. Hence, such things are mere shows, outward nullities which do not reveal the inward reason of the world." (page 212, *Philosophy of Hegel*). But this is strangely contradicted later. "The existence of evil, error, imperfection is no mere subjective illusion. These are real, yet they are compatible with the fact that the Absolute Good is already, now and always, accomplished and that the universe, therefore, is perfect." It is difficult to understand this inconsistency unless we accept the doctrine of Degrees of Reality which is just what Vedanta, in its theory of *Maya*, propounds. Evil is the effect of Ignorance, of *Maya*, and is real, with the reality of the second Degree. Thus Hegelianism agrees with Vedanta in many important respects; where they differ, the advantage is clearly on the side of Vedanta. Hegel starts with Being which is the Idea implicit, treats it as a concrete One and deduces from it the whole world, but pronounces the entire world to be unreal, while the Idea alone is real. Vedanta starts with Brahman which is absolute

Being, which does not lend itself to be viewed in relation to everything else, which is Pure Consciousness and blessedness, and explains the origination of the world as its manifestation, through the power of *Maya* (the principle of unreality) associated with Brahman in the mind of the unenlightened. Reality is thus left intact in its eternal purity. Hegel makes the world deduce itself logically from the Idea, and yet, most inconsistently, is obliged to regard the world as unreal. Vedanta, again, finds Brahman or Reality, in our Life, Experience. Hegel's Idea is a logical fiction. One with such precarious notions of reality and unreality need not have accused the oriental mind of its vagueness.

Hegel's system cannot comprehend in its purview Life in its entirety. Concepts form but a part of it, though a very self-assertive part. Percepts as the original will not be compressed into concepts—the copies—and more than both there is Life itself without which neither concepts nor percepts can leap into birth. It is I that conceive or perceive the world, and surely I cannot be included in my own acts. I am not my own act. I may choose to be idle, to go to sleep, to be reduced to immediate being. I am more than concept or percept. Reality must include both and cannot be exhausted by only one of them. Hegel's Absolute Idea is therefore an inadequate conception. Again, if every category, such as Being, includes every other, it must have every other implicitly in it, and development is their becoming explicit. But this process presupposes time, and as the objective universals or categories are timeless, the process is inconceivable, impossible. Hence, no purpose is gained by foisting implicitness and explicitness on the categories. In the next place, every category being the Idea already, whether explicitly or implicitly, no reason can be shown why such a self-contained unit should crave expansion or contraction. If it is a necessity like that which causes a seed to grow into a tree, then all talk of freedom is clean moonshine. A seed is an element of the world of plurality, and must submit to environmental conditions, to forces acting on it. But the Idea which is the only Reality cannot be conceivably forced to work under external conditions, as it can have nothing external to it. If it is answered that it imposes its own laws on itself, the question still would be 'to what end?' A defence may possibly be set up on the analogy of Vedanta. Why should Brahman create? For sport? Well, the Idea also sports. Yes, but to Vedanta, creation or manifestation is but *Maya*, and Brahman remains unaffected. If Hegel should offer a similar explanation for his Idea his position would

become identical with that of Vedanta, except in one essential respect. Brahman, to Vedanta, is an established Truth, Life entire; while Hegel's Idea would still remain a concept—too narrow to take in either individual percept or life. The universal going into the particular to become the individual as the principle of religion is too wide of the mark to give satisfaction to any man or community of men.

It would be but fair that I give a specimen of Hegel's deduction of categories. For obvious reasons I choose that in which the many is shown to spring from the One. "From the *One* issues the many or the many ones. For the self-relation of the one is relation. By a negative relation is meant a relation to another, *i.e.*, a relation of the being which negates its other. For the self-relatedness of the one exists only by virtue of that it has its other in it. Being has only become Being for Self by absorbing its other. Its self-relation is therefore relation to another. That other is internal to it, yet because it is another it is also external to it. For to be another means to be external, or in other words, that the one is self-related means that the one is related to the one. This involves a distinction between the one which is related and the one to which it is related. The one distinguishes itself from itself. Thus the one suffers diremption into a multiplicity of one, the many." (Art: 208, *Philosophy of Hegel*). The first thing to draw our attention is the expression *self-relation*. Now, if Hegel began with a real one and deduced the many from it, he must have scrupulously avoided every implication of a second. But a relation implies two terms, and to speak of self-relation is already to have conceived the one to be split up, and the many is seen to be flourishing before it is born with such travails! Indeed, the scheme of his deduction, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, starts with an assumption of multiplicity and relation, and the derivation of the Universe from Being, is not the derivation of the many from the one, but of the many from the many, assumed for convenience to be one to start with. Thus his deductions are shorn of all interest beyond their ingenuity.

What proves, however, beyond doubt the profundity of Hegel's metaphysical genius is his explanation of sleep and waking. It wanted a very little to enlarge his vision so as to take in Vedantic Truth. "Whereas", Stace says, on page 332, *Philosophy of Hegel*, "on its first appearance the Natural Soul was entirely empty and homogeneous and so without internal distinctions, there is now within it the implicit distinction between itself, *i.e.*, the homogeneous blank with which we began on the one hand, and the affections

of its environment which appear in it as physical qualities and alterations on the other." The former Hegel calls its immediate being, the latter we may call its content. When the individuality now distinguishes within itself its content from its mere immediate being, we have the state of waking. Sleep on the other hand is its relapse into the state of its immediate being. The immediate being is an undifferentiated universality, which when it becomes specialized and differentiates itself, gives rise to its content, the physical qualities and alterations. Sleep is, so to speak, the loss of the content, the return to homogeneous universality. In it the Soul has returned to its first phase, mere being. It may be regarded as consciousness robbed of all content, *i.e.*, consciousness of nothing, unconsciousness ". Here we may remark that Hegel considers sleep as immediate being or consciousness robbed of its content, the first phase of the Soul. When it develops its content, and differentiates this from itself, it has waking; when it loses this content and returns to its homogeneous universality it sleeps. Now how is the content lost and recovered? Why should it lead to waking or sleeping? Does the content mean the body and the faculties of the mind? If the development of the content leads to waking, what are dreams? Besides, why do we go invariably to sleep every day after waking? And why does sleep betray the same characteristics every time, while no two dreams are alike? Do these states occur as a series in waking time? Why should the soul be looked upon as a denizen of the waking world alone, while it passes from state to state, heedless of the attractions of each? What is the meaning of the states? Why should the human spirit reduce itself to immediate being every day? How are dream-bodies and dream-worlds to be explained? It is a mere accident that prevented Hegel from pursuing this line of enquiry. Otherwise the world would perhaps have had the inestimable benefit of a great mind—one of the most gifted—discovering independently those spiritual Truths which lie imbedded in the oldest Upanishads, and which, enforced with his learning and eloquence, must have long ago become the accepted creed and the cherished possession of Europe.

"The purpose of the Universe," says Hegel, "is the complete realization of the mind of God in actuality. Philosophy is the knowledge of the Idea by itself. Then the Idea becomes the Absolute Idea or Self-consciousness" (page 517, *Philosophy of Hegel*). Hegel forgets that if the Idea seeks to know itself, it *begins* with Self-consciousness instead of ending with it.

As regards the objective universals, we must remember that

they are beyond time and space. The difficulty then is to conceive their plurality. While, on the one hand, owing to their difference in character each must be distinct from the rest, their manyness—when they are not limited by space and time—must place them beyond comprehension. The only way to grasp them is to regard them as the Absolute Idea which implicitly or explicitly includes all the universals, while the things, the individual things that exist internally or externally, are its manifestations. A problem now presents itself relating to the scale of values, which Pantheism must solve. On page 312, *Greek Thought*, Stace remarks: "The main idea of Pantheism is that everything is God. The clod of earth is divine, because it is a manifestation of a deity. Now this idea is all very well and is in fact essential to philosophy. But it must be supplemented by a rationally grounded scale of values, for how is the saint higher than the clod of earth? Why avoid evil since it is also a manifestation of God as good? Mere Pantheism ends in this calamitous view. The Hindus worship cows and snakes, and allow grossest abominations. Although Hinduism has its scale of values it has no rational foundation for them. The thought that all is God and the thought that there are higher and lower beings are on the surface opposed and inconsistent theories. Yet both are necessary and philosophy must find a reconciliation. Hinduism fails to do this. It asserts both but fails to bring them to unity. Now it asserts the one view, and again the other. This of course is connected with the general defect of oriental thinking. Hinduism has its doctrine of evolution, but no philosophy of evolution." In his treatment of Greek and Hegelian Philosophy, Stace honours Hinduism by frequent references to it, sometimes in appreciation, but more often to contrast its defects with the perfections of European thought. Every one has the right to hold his own view. But to condemn oriental thinking, as a whole, is more than truth or justice will allow. In this particular instance, his dictum is unphilosophic. Now, which is the sphere of values and where can we have a scale of them? Every pleasure, every desire, every enjoyment in life has its own form and content expressible in terms of this world's good. Bodily vigour enables execution of work, mental vigour enables conception and carrying out of great designs. Goodness brings its own satisfaction, and between its infinite forms ought to exhibit as many grades of merit. But this is possible only in a sphere of distinctions and differences. In the oneness of the Idea or Brahman, there cannot be a scale of values while in the manyness of its manifestations there can be. This is a simple and obvious truth which cannot be unknown to Stace. A snake, a clod of earth,

a saint—these are empirical facts, of different degrees of value among the things of the world, among the manifestations of the Idea; and no one, a Hindu, any more than another, confounds their respective places in life. But as a manifestation of the Reality, the Idea or the Brahman, as a philosophical truth, a snake is as much that, as a saint; a clod of earth, as a crown of gold. To endow the distinctions of sense and of convention, with noumenal or transcendental validity is a fundamental error which Vedanta warns against in the name of "mistaken transference". As regards symbolism in worship, I have dealt with the principle already in detail; and I will only add that a Hindu choosing any object, a tree or a stone, as a symbol of God for worship, shows thereby the firmness of his grasp of the oneness of Reality behind all variations of forms and names, and the depth of his conviction independent of and triumphing over all individual prejudice or prepossession. To the devout Hindu it is the Truth that counts, to Stace, apparently, the outward form. *As to the grossest abominations*, I am sure no enlightened Hindu will defend or justify them, whether allowed by the follower of one religion or another. But Vedanta is not *mere* Pantheism; it is a perfect system of Truth, rationally built up, though no man in the street of India or Europe may be expected to know the basic principles of his practical creed. Vedanta reconciles the variety of waking life with the unity of Brahman by the doctrine of Degrees of Reality. To deny that she does, to allege that "now it asserts one view, and again the other," and to ascribe this to "the general defect of oriental thinking," is all utterly bad—crass, unwarranted misrepresentation. But Stace is unaccountably biassed against Vedanta. In referring to Philo's system, he says, "This has the characteristic ring of Asiatic Pseudo-Philosophy. It reminds us forcibly of the Upanishads. We are passing out of the realm of thought, reason and philosophy into the dream and shadow land of oriental mysticism, where the heavy scents of beautiful flowers, drug the intellect and obliterate thought to a blissful and languorous repose." (Page 371, *Greek Thought*). If such is the real view of Stace with reference to the teaching of the Upanishads, and of Asian thought in general, his constant references to Vedantic thought are inexplicable. For I do not wish to believe that Stace, as a philosopher, will condemn what he knows not or be actuated by the pettiness of feelings that characterise inferior minds.

In pointing out the merits of Hegelianism, Stace says that as Hegel explains Reason as the principle of the world, it must

remain as the ultimate truth, for no one can further ask what is the Reason of Reason? Reason is its own Reason. Quite true. But one can still question, I think, why Reason should struggle to manifest itself. It will not do to say, "It is not existent. It must come to exist." But why? The fact of the matter is that pure intellect on which Hegel entirely relies cannot wing its flight beyond diversity. Deduction itself and reason are conceivable only in a sphere of duality. Hegel unconsciously assumes what he so solemnly undertakes to prove. One must take up a definite stand. Either give up Monism or give up deduction. To mix up the two is to come under the power of *Maya*, the principle of contradictions and unreality.

Yet, Hegel's philosophy is not to be identified with Pantheism, it seems. Stace enters a strong protest against such identification. "For Pantheism asserts that every individual object, a stone, a tree, a man, is God—they are already, in all their immediacy and particularity, identical with God. But Hegel's position is that the individual human mind is not God. By its immediacy and finiteness it is alienated from Him. It is only by renouncing and giving up its particularity that it can enter into union with God. I as this particular Ego with foolish impulses, whims and caprices, am essentially not the Universal Mind, but only a particular Mind. Nevertheless the Universal Mind is in me, and is my essential core and substance. . . . . . . It is not held to be either Pantheism or blasphemy to say that God is in the hearts of good men; and this is the Hegelian position." Now this is distinction without difference, an illogical pandering to popular prejudice, unworthy of philosophic dignity. To say that I am essentially not the Universal Mind, but immediately to assert that the Universal Mind is my essential core and substance—this is to mystify his position, not to elucidate it. And how does Vedanta explain the identity? "I with all my sins and shortcomings am not God, for God is sinless, wise and holy. But he is my *metaphysical Self.* As a metaphysical being I am He." Only Ignorance makes me feel otherwise. There can be no blasphemy when this thought is truly understood. And if I am not God, how can He be the core and essence of my being? And how unfair and untrue, to identify me with my superficial, temporary features, my whims and follies, and to overlook my essential nature? For what I am essentially, that I am truly. Either Hegel believes in Monism or does not. If he does, then no subterfuge or equivocation can save him from Pantheism—Pantheism Absolute. If there is only one Reality, all

distinctions must be appearance, and even a stone, or an animal, whatever its position in man's practical esteem, must be identical with God. Hegel cannot wriggle himself out of that situation. A Hegelian might say that he does not push his Monism so far. Then it is not ripe speculation, fearlessly carried to its legitimate issue, but speculation that has stopped short half-way, to avoid a disagreeable conclusion. Such an act will give no comfort, for truth consciously hidden away will eternally vex the human mind, and make peace impossible.

It may still be questioned, why should not one starting with a single Principle explain the universe as having sprung from it? But that would imply that the Principle is similar to an empirical entity, a seed, for example, which afterwards grows into a tree, in short to an organism. A world-Principle, however, cannot be contemplated as an organism, for the conception of an organism presupposes a whole world of time, space, and causation already evolved, as well as the consciousness of the thinker, waiting for its turn of explanation. And I have already shown that reason and deduction are possible only in an atmosphere of duality. It appears to me, therefore, that Hegel's system of the Absolute Identity marks no real advance beyond Spinoza, and that Spinoza's Pantheism, was as perfect a Monism, as speculation could make it. Spinoza's inability to explain the world was not made up for by Hegel's success in deducing it. For, the latter is mere fancy. *Maya* cannot be brought under the power of the intellect, its own offspring.

It may not be here out of place to dispose of a philistine objection levelled against Pantheism from time to time. If all is God, why should not one commit vice, since commission of vice, no less than vice itself ought to be God? In putting this question, it is forgotten that punishment that regularly follows vice, must also be looked upon as God. Hence, in defending immorality on the basis of Pantheism, we are reasoning in a vicious circle from which escape is impossible. In the first place, all moral acts proceed from the higher instincts, while immoral ones arise from motives which imply distinctions and difference. In the next place, in every act of ours we are conscious of our own agency automatically, and the Pantheistic concept arises only in moments of reflexion which is invariably countered by the impulses of volition. Pantheism not only does not sanction vice, but is its sworn enemy. For, all being God, genuine Pantheism will find no room left for the indulgence of selfishness.

I cannot close this inadequately brief reference to Hegel without calling in question the justness of his remarks on

Hinduism. They may be the result of pure ignorance, or of incurable prejudice. They certainly evince no correct information or mature judgment. In the chapter on Religion, Stace represents Hegel as criticising Hinduism in these terms: "In Hinduism the conception of substance is more explicitly developed. . . . . There is only substance . . . It is formless. God is the formless One, Brahman—abstract unity. As against this One all other existence is unreal, merely accidental. Nothing has any right of independent existence in itself. It arises out of the One and again vanishes in the One. Though the One may frequently be spoken of in terms which seem to imply personality, yet it is not spirit that is the real content, but only substance. Such phrases merely imply superficial personification. The One is essentially neuter." Well, I am irresistibly reminded of the proverb, "those who live in glass houses should not throw stones". Hegel, who audaciously erects mere universality into a God, which is not a Person, but only a personality, and manufactures concreteness by imagining one universality to contain infinite others, who has never shown how an individual *thing* can arise by piling up any amount of universals, reproaches Hinduism alleging that its God is substance, and not spirit, that its unity is empty, that the One is essentially neuter and that no other thing has any right of independent existence. In the first place, we are not told how Hegel was able to form these views. Is it the Vedas, the Upanishads, or the Puranas, the Epics, or the Smritis that led to his conclusions? Has he been able to separate the rational—Vedantic—element from the poetic, the traditional and the ritual elements? A whole life devoted to the study of the immense mass of Hindu Scriptures with their disciplines, will not suffice to accomplish the task. Yet critics with glib tongues will be blatant over the defects and the inconsistencies of the Hindu religion and philosophy. Many of these detractors cannot claim to possess even a passable acquaintance with Sanskrit. Do they study their Plato and Aristotle in the same fashion, I ask?

But to answer his charges. The Hindu God is not Substance but Spirit, not mere spirituality, but a personal Being. Siva is the cosmic consciousness, the central all-pervading Light at which every other torch of individual consciousness has been lighted. Vishnu is the inmost essence of man, of all Existence, the being immanent in all hearts, while Brahman in the neuter gender is the witness of the three states, neither male nor female, but the Principle of Unity that holds the world together. But what is more than all, what the greatest thinkers fail to recognize is that

the Hindu God is never an external entity, can never be regarded as object, except to help the human understanding, except to offer worship. The very aim of Vedanta in declaring Brahman to be void of attributes is to caution the enquirer against conceiving it as substance.

As to "nothing else having an independent existence in itself", this is ungracious, mischievous. Hegel's own system is equally guilty of the doctrine. To him also, things have no reality, no independence, as they depend on the Universals which alone are real, but do not exist. That they all *arise* out of the One and *vanish* into the One, is not speculative phantasy. It is our undeniable experience through the three states. But it was not given to Hegel to descry the only source of real knowledge. Brahman as the Great Being is neither an abstract nor a concrete One. The terms cannot apply to it. For it is beyond the reach of intellectual distinctions.

Hegel's ignorance of Vedantic method is responsible for the next statement. "It (the One) does not genuinely produce them out of itself, and then again restore its own unity by taking them back into itself. . . . Although it is *asserted* that they have proceeded out of the One, and are therefore dependent beings, yet since the One is abstract and has not itself produced them, they are for that reason in reality independent beings . . . a chaos of disconnected forms. . . . Because it does not retain them within its grasp, they are therefore outside it, independent of it, and riot in this independence." The fault of Hinduism was, according to Hegel's first statement, that it allowed nothing the right of independent existence in itself, and now he has so soon forgotten himself and veers round saying that since the One does not genuinely produce things out of itself, they are independent beings—a chaos of disconnected forms, rioting in their independence. Can unfairness go farther? How is Hinduism to save itself? Things proceed from the One and depend on it. No, says, Hegel, your One is abstract and cannot produce. Things must be independent of the One—but they are unreal, accidental. In that case, you will not allow them right of independent existence. Hence, to concede or deny independent existence to things is equally culpable, and Hinduism in any case must go to the wall.

I am not concerned to prove that the conception of *Trimurti* is identical with the Christian Trinity or claim a Hegelian's approbation on that account. I shall proceed to his criticism of Hindu worship. "The element of worship in Hinduism," he says, (page 497)," corresponds to its conception of God. God is here

substance, the undetermined, abstract, contentless emptiness and vacancy. Now worship means essentially the annulling of the separation between God and Man, the Reconciliation, the restoring of the unity and identity of God and Man. Hence, in Hinduism what man has to do in order to become identical with God is to empty himself of all content, to become that very vacancy which God is. Thus the state *aimed* at is an emotionless will-less, deedless, pure abstraction of mind, in which all positive content of consciousness is superseded. God is here a pure abstraction, and man, in becoming the same abstraction, becomes identical with God, attains 'union with Brahma.' Thus worship aims at the complete submergence of consciousness." The idea of worship in Hinduism or Christianity is not "the annulling of the separation between God and Man" or "the restoring of the unity and identity of God and Man." Worship presupposes difference and distinction, and is impossible in the philosophic level which unifies all. It is external and belongs to the sphere of action, or recognition of the great interval between the Highest Being who is all holy, and the human being, an individual. Worship is offer in word, deed and thought, of love and esteem due to the Author of our Being. Hence, the Hindu distinguishes it from meditation which is contemplation, logical or formal, of thought or sensuous forms. When the Devil said, "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me," Jesus answered, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."—St. Matthew. It is, hence, clear that worship means service. As Hegel has misrepresented the Hindu notion of God, one cannot expect him to have done better in respect of Hindu worship. God to the Hindu is the highest Personal Being endowed with all auspicious qualities, Mercy, Love, Wisdom &c. God is simply the dynamic obverse of Reality or Brahman, the Lord of Creation, Protection and Destruction, the principle of salvation to the human soul. The Vishnu, the Bhagavata, and the other great Puranas, recount the stories of God's incarnation and His incessant activities for the good of the world. There are many collections of "Praises," each consisting of a thousand names by which the nature and character of the Deity is described for purposes of meditation and prayer—Vishnu, Siva, Krishna, Lalita, etc. Each has His or Her own list of names, daily recited by the devout in Hindu homes. The most poetic praises and supplications occur in the Rig-veda with which every one aspiring to be a well-informed critic, ought to be perfectly familiar. Hegel's dictum, therefore, that "in Hinduism what one has to do to become identical with God is to empty himself of all content, to

become that very vacancy that God is", is shorn of all dignity and worth, for he is concentrating all the force of his soul in kicking at that vacancy which he conjures up as the Hindu God. First, Vedanta is not Theology, and worship is not Vedantic knowledge. Secondly, Hindu Theism does not aim at absorption in God, or "union with Brahman". To confound so wofully knowledge of Truth which reveals the Divine in man with acts of faith that raises a wall between God and man would not have been possible to better-informed souls, more sympathetically disposed towards alien faiths. God is not a pure abstraction. The Vedas teach that God, who was alone at first, conceived the wish to become many, and so became all this Universe.

It is, besides, impossible for a man to empty himself of all content. For, whatever is seen as his content, is objective to him, and he surely is not what he can separate from himself; and what he cannot, how can he abstract from? But Hegel's notion of the subject is unphilosophic and untrue, for his *actual soul* is the result of the coalescence of two halves of the soul to unity—to a single self or subject. (page 337). He that can thus make the subject originate like an object, through a split or coalescence, can surely be excused lesser enormities of thought or action.

It is not true that Hindu worship aims at complete submergence of consciousness. Meditation does that, whether Hindu or any other. Not to distinguish between the two is deplorable. Hegel's is not a perfect system, not a universal provision for all grades of intellect, for all conditions of life and strata of society as Vedanta is. He has not uttered a syllable to explain the mystery in which birth and death are wrapped up, or the lot of those that die young, miserable, or ignorant. If, as Hegel claims, the sole purpose of the entire Universe is to arrive at *his* Philosophy, it cannot be that the World-Spirit was indifferent to the spiritual interests of those who never can or could attain to it. It is the height of ego-centric illusion.

Stace draws our attention to two points in this connection. First, God is spirit which is not abstract but concrete. Salvation is not attained through mental abstraction, " but through the concrete work of the spirit, through its striving after universal ends, in morality, in the state, and in religion." Secondly, " Hindu renunciation in order to attain union with the One is not like Christian self-sacrifice, nor does this renunciation import any sense of sin, or atonement for guilt, since the Hindu God is abstract. Morality and righteousness are no essential part of Hindu Worship." Comparing this with the representation of Hegel's view on

page 489, namely, "It is only by renouncing and giving up its particularity that it (this individual human mind) can enter into union with God," I am bewildered as to what to look upon as the definite position of Hegel in regard to worship. I do not believe that Stace takes up the position of one who holds a brief for any particular religion, but his uncharitable fling at Hindu God and renunciation as unworthy of the free religions of the world, squares neither with facts, nor with fairness. I have shown that to Vedanta God is not a pious hope as it is to revealed religions, but the fundamental fact of Life, identical with the ego, and only wrongly conceived as another. Still to brand the Hindu God as abstract is either crass ignorance or wilful perversity; and to vilify Hindu renunciation, at whatever sacrifice, or annihilation of self, as deficient in morality or righteousness, because it imports no sense of sin, is consciously to do a bit of heartless Evangelism, which under the cloak of philosophy might delude the unwary, but is no true or sensible criticism. But I have done with bitterness and harsh words. I would fain part from Stace and his memorable work on Hegel with deep feelings of grateful appreciation. Without his clear and methodical exposition, I should have found it nearly impossible to get at the core of Hegel's thought, and in whatever respects I may have disagreed with Stace, or Hegel, I hope that my views may be received as fairly conceived and frankly expressed.

Hegel's is not a system whose prominent parts fit into each other artistically or rationally. The first Principle which is real and independent is unaccountably afflicted with an uncontrollable craving for existence or unreality—a notion that militates sharply against that of the Soul's fall, and its endeavour to reunite itself with the One through Christian worship. Why should the World-Principle sustain a fall, moral or spiritual, only to seek re-ascent to its pristine purity? If it should recover its lost position, had it really fallen from it? Or is it all a fiction woven out of the slender threads of fancy? When it is added that Evil being irrational is unreal, and the Good, although seemingly unrealized, is eternally accomplished, does it not unquestionably reduce Morality, Righteousness and Christian Self-Denial, by the reality and necessity of which such store is set, to worse than nullity, nay to tragic mockery? To avow, therefore, that his philosophy closely corroborates the doctrines of Christian Religion, of the Trinity, the Creation, the Fall, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Resurrection and the Ascension, is a strain on Reason, and no solace to the Soul.

Hegel's Absolute as a concrete Idea involves him in all the

contradictions of an intellectual concept. If the first Principle contains within it the whole world implicitly, then this relation of the container and the contained must make it an empirical entity, within the domain of time and change, and cannot explain the latter. To do that the first Principle ought to be, as Hegel himself claims, beyond time. To conceive it therefore as concrete is to dash it down from its transcendental throne, deprive it of its independence and reality. The distinction that he insists on between the Hindu conception of an abstract Being, and his of concrete Being is thus suicidal. Abstract and Concrete are divisions of the intellect. Life and reality include far more than the intellect and cannot be confined within its narrow bounds. Vedanta's Brahman is neither abstract nor concrete. It is Life that we all experience as transcending the three states, no mere figment of a learned imagination. Yet, it is all this picturesque world, with its marvellous change and development.

To believe in a principle and then to fight shy of the consequences of such a belief is ridiculous. To adopt a monistic, a self-determined principle, the Idea, and to derive a scale of values from it without the admixture of a second entity is impossible. Plato and Aristotle were more successful, because they were expressly dualists. They started with matter and form. Hegel does away with matter and contrives to explain variety and development with the aid of non-Being, contained in Being which is not a pure, an abstract Being but a concrete Being. But the device is ineffective, since the conception is untenable, as already pointed out. If then all is the Idea, how are the distinctions of life to be accounted for? If every object, notion or image be the Idea, why should one thing be treated as a higher, or a lower manifestation than another? What determines the difference? On the side of the Idea, there is no second entity to differentiate it. Consequently the only element of difference is to be sought in the effect that each thing produces upon the mind, with its individual likes and dislikes. Values thus depend upon the perceiver, and his particular feelings, upon life and how things promote or retard its purposes. Surely, by itself nothing is good or beautiful. It becomes such by its relation to life. The contempt for pantheism which sees the manifestation of Reality in every object, is ill-conceived and unwarranted. For, that the Idea is better manifested in one thing than in another is unreasonable. Hence, Hegel's æsthetics is unsound. He cannot explain beauty or morality.

The strongest objection to Hegel is that his system makes me a hopeless riddle to myself. My 'I' becomes a non-descript. It

is not an existence like the tree that I perceive, for it is not presented to consciousness. It is not a real being, since it is not a mere idea, or universal. As an individual entity it is unreal. Yet I cognize the whole world only as an object to myself. Am I real or unreal? What interest has Reality or unreality to me, if I am not the very presupposition of all experience? Thus, Hegel's solution carries with it its own refutation. That which is best known to me, that which should precede everything else in my estimate of life, that through and for which alone I must seek to know the Absolute—my own self—sweeter to me than a hundred philosophical systems, becomes a mystery, neither real as an Idea, nor unreal as an object of Nature, neither existing nor being—a veritable *Maya*.

SCHOPENHAUER

Such an obsession of "the Idea" demanded a powerful reaction, in the doctrine of "the Will" of Schopenhauer, if European thought was not to stultify itself by ignoring Life which included much more than the idea, which in its feelings, volitions, percepts, and intuitions comprehended Reality in all its variety and movement, familiar to every living being. It is the fashion to dismiss Schopenhauer by applying to him the contemptuous epithet "pessimist." But truth is irresistible, and sentiment must sometime give way to reflexion. For when all misrepresentation is cast aside Schopenhauer will be acknowledged to be a more comprehensive thinker, who never compromises with actual facts for the convenience of a beautiful theory ill-adapted to life. Another main reason why Schopenhauer is unpopular is that he openly declares his approval of the oriental Thought, which goes against the grain of western prejudice. Also his illusionism communicates a shock to the average mind which would not have its sense of the world's reality—of the joys of power, wealth, dominion, and sex-instinct—rebated to the smallest extent.

The one-sided deification by Hegel of the Concept or the Idea in preference to volition and feeling which are equally independent elements of life, and his obvious failure to do justice to the underivable nature of the two latter, added to the mystery of the Perceptual Flux which his Philosophy left untouched, gave rise to a powerful commotion in the thinking world, and Schopenhauer's theory of the Will as the first Principle was the immediate result. According to him a concept is but passive. It cannot explain real movement and development. Forces of Nature are not mere ideas. My desire or will to do anything, is not to be converted

into a mere concept. The motive power is in volition directed by feeling. A concept is but a servant of both. A static view of life ignores ends and purposes, but the most dynamic element is the Will, known to us as volitions, though in its own nature inscrutable. The physical forces, the instincts of animals and the emotions of man are all identical in their inner nature, and recognized by us as different only in their phenomenal existence. Thus, "Schopenhauer's philosophy is a protest written in large letters against the idea that a complete knowledge of the essence of the world and the purpose of the world is to be found in reason alone." (Page 7, W. Caldwell's *Schopenhauer's System in its Philosophical Significance*). "Reason can only systematise the material brought to it by experience so that the full meaning of reality can be known only in direct experience and not in the abstractions of mere thought." Doubtless Schopenhauer himself rushes into a dogmatism of the Will instead of that of Reason (Pantheism instead of Panlogism); for neither the Will, nor Reason can exhaust all reality. Feelings affect us much more than either. Love claims "quite half of the energies and thoughts of the younger half of mankind and it is the ultimate aim of all human effort." The darker passions, anger, envy, hatred, cloud the intellect and warp its judgment. Reason after all is " only an instinct, more complex perhaps than the other instincts, but still an instinct whose working we may scientifically describe and determine." (Page 12). "A merely intellectual philosophy of life is hollow and superficial ". (Page 13). "It is a cold and external way of looking at life." (Page 14).

Besides, although will, feeling, and concept are all distinct in their nature, and are not transformable into each other, yet none of them can be found functioning alone in man, and the intellect cannot conceive their independent existence, except when they are viewed objectively, that is, externally in other beings. But this presupposes the consciousness of the observer, so that without consciousness a consideration of the triad is impossible. Schopenhauer's elevation of the Will above the rest, erecting it into an ultimate mystery is an unwarranted exaggeration of its metaphysical significance. The Will no doubt predominates in active life, but action is possible only in the sphere of time, and to make the first Principle ever active is to drag it down into the empirical arena in which time &c., reign supreme. It was Schopenhauer's ambition 'to retain his hold on Idealism' while doing full justice to naturalism that led to this fatal mistake. Escape from natural life as opposed to real life, is sought by Schopenhauer in art and

in religious quietism and mysticism, for the world must be 'overcome'. Why? If the Will is the motor-principle, why and how should we escape from the effects of its activity? Because the world with its pain and misery is an illusion? But the world is merely a manifestation of the Will's activity, a visibility of its affirmation. Why should it lead to evil, and at the same time to an illusive world? This self-contradiction is at the very root of Schopenhauer's system. To avoid it he must admit that the affirmation itself is unreal, is *Maya*; in which case nothing is gained by his theory of the Will. If Hegel's evolution, as Hartmann remarks, is only an evolution of ideas in his brain, the activity of the Will in Schopenhauer must, in the highest sense, be conceded to be only illusory. To Schopenhauer the Absolute beneath the 'husks' of phenomena remains a postulate, a belief rather than an object of rational knowledge, and 'the world of sense and of understanding is merely phenomenal, visionary, in fact non-existent.'

But is he fairly entitled to hold his theory of Illusionism, consistently with his Pessimism and active Will affirming or denying? Stace accuses him of being obsessed with oriental thought, with Buddhistic and Vedantic ideas for which Stace has no great admiration. Schopenhauer's Illusionism is taken to be the doctrine of *Maya*. But *Maya* has no place in a system that attributes action and change to the first Principle or identifies it with Will, except as a concession to the realistic leanings of the natural man. His Will cannot be absolute. A Will has no significance without an end in view, or means of realizing it. It individuates and circumscribes itself, and so converts itself into an empirical entity. The Brahman, on the other hand, as the highest Reality is perfection itself and needs no effort by which to attain to that perfection. Its willing and developing into a universe, is accepted only in a secondary sense. But, side by side with his Illusionism, Schopenhauer maintains that the world is full of evil, and must be overcome. Where is room for real evil in an unreal world? And is it true that life is nothing but misery? Experience tells us that there are real pleasures mixed up with some unavoidable pains. If the pain is to be avoided the pleasures must be foregone too. Doubtless some of the vulgar pleasures are unworthy of a serious mind. But the delight of art, of self-denial and of religious experiences are admittedly real, and how can such be enjoyed except in life? Besides, Schopenhauer's Will even in its absolute, unknowable nature cannot be self-determined, or self-satisfied. 'It must have a valency of affirmation. Otherwise, it could

not have affirmed a universe. It must also have a valency of denial, which, however, cannot be brought into play and must remain mortified till the affirmation has been effected. An Absolute, with such desiderata, or innate, irrepressible craving, ceases to be such. It is no more than a plausible postulate.

Schopenhauer's ethics does not unfold an automatic eternal principle, operating without intermisson or hindrance, independently of human tendencies or volitions. There is no assurance that, in spite of human endeavours, failures or perversities, the Law of Righteousness is working triumphantly, and that the soul is ever progressing towards its goal. If we are to choose the path of self-denial, because affirmation of the Will to life brings woes in its train, there are still those unreasonable men and women that will persist in a vicious course for the pleasures it promises, whatever the pain it entails. What is to force them back into righteousness and virtue but the eternal vigilance and solicitude of an All-Merciful World-Spirit which, as our own sweet self, loves the humblest and poorest of us better than ourselves, and is potent enough to effectuate that reform of the spirit which shall be its salvation? This great Power is not a theory or an abstract concept, but is our very self which we know better than anything else, the self which is ever *awake* in our sleep and dream, as in our waking. Schopenhauer calls the self not merely the subject, but also the human body. Our body is just the visibility of our affirmation. If this is to be taken seriously, since we must be affirming so long as we live, and since even after death the body does not vanish but is there to testify to our affirmation, how is denial possible under the circumstance? Can it begin after death? Or does every one cease to affirm when he dies? What distinguishes the philosopher's soul from that of the plain man in that case? Schophenhauer himself declares that life is assured to the will. If a man's will is not subdued in life, will another life be assured to him? Does Schopenhauer believe in transmigration?

It is easy to confound Schopenhauer's Illusionism and Pessimism with Vedantic doctrines labelled with similar names. But the difference is fundamental. With a Will that can affirm or deny, to call the results of its tendencies illusory or evil is not permissible. Vedanta, on the contrary, does not *postulate* its first Principle. It proves that Pure Consciousness as Reality is the changeless witness of the three states, of life in its entirety, and is an unquestionable fact of experience. Its conclusion that the rest is unreal is an immediate corollary. In the next place, waking life, which apparently is all that Schopenhauer has in view, is

not all life, and its constituents—will, thought, feeling, and the external world—being intimately related to one another are equally real within the limits of waking. Further, Vedanta does not brand all waking life as unmixed evil. The paths of duty and virtue and of religious devotion lead to undeniable happiness both here and hereafter. But man's ignorance of his own Brahmic nature is condemned as the greatest misfortune, as Ignorance is the mother of all ills. Schopenhauer cannot be said to have solved the problem of evil. He observes that willing is the source of all our woes, and he directly concludes that affirmation is the cause of misery. But the question of the origin of evil *is not effectively tackled.* Why should affirmation lead to the ills of life? Vedanta shows that Reality or Pure Consciousness is Bliss, and is identical with the human self. Hence, man's belief in the reality of non-self, of a non-self independent of and external to Reality involves him in endless woes; for as the Upanishad says all other than self is afflicted with evil.

A remarkable defect of Schopenhauer is, as Caldwell remarks, "his failure to take an adequate account of feeling as a *tertium quid* between the intellect and Will". "The feelings give us a real qualitative and positive consciousness of the world which no philosophy can afford to neglect. Reality, to a great extent, is what we feel it to be—heart of our heart, a life that pulsates *not merely in response* to our feelings, but in these very feelings themselves". (page 480). "Had Schopenhauer used feeling as a mediator between thought and being, between reason and sense, between the will and intellect, between art and science, and religion and science, his system would not have been full of so many gaping oppositions and contradictions, nor the world would have seemed so illusory as to baffle thought at every turn." (Page 482). The reader need not be told that the greatest defect of Schopenhauer's system is that its view of life is confined to the waking state alone, an error common to all non-Vedantic estimates of life.

I will now conclude my brief review of Schopenhauer's philosophy which to me is the greatest effort made by Westerners to grasp Life in its fullest significance, Life not merely as an Idea, but as Will of which ideas are the first stage of manifestation. He defied all convention in appreciating the truths of Buddhism and Vedanta and in bravely and openly adopting "Illusionism" and "Pessimism", perhaps even transmigration, as the root-principles of his system. Christian Europe may look upon him as a proselyte' to oriental belief, and many may still dread and abhor

his immortal works. But such irrational prejudices must soon wear away and his system be accorded a place in the first rank of philosophical thought.

CHAPTER XXIII: BRITISH AND AMERICAN THOUGHT

HERBERT SPENCER

HERBERT SPENCER was perhaps the most prominent of those that believed in Evolutionistic Philosophy, or the doctrine of development as a scientific theory in Biology, established first by Charles Darwin. He was an Agnostic, a word designating "one who is conscious of the inadequacy of our knowledge to solve the problem, what is the reality corresponding to our ultimate scientific, philosophical and religious ideas?" The following extracts from his *First Principles* will make his position clear. "The power which the Universe manifests is utterly inscrutable. The highest scientific ideas, such as Space, Time, Matter, involve contradictions." "By reality we mean persistence in consciousness." (Page 125). "Whether we perceive the reality itself or an effect invariably wrought on us by it, the result is the same, and both are real, equally." (Page (125). "Thought being possible only under relations the relative reality can be conceived as such only in connexion with an Absolute Reality; and the connexion between the two being absolutely persistent in our consciousness is real in the same sense as the terms it unites are real. Ultimate modes of being cannot be known or conceived as they exist in themselves, that is out of relation to our consciousness." (Page 125-126). "Truths that have a relative reality are the only truths which concern us, or can possibly be known to us." (Page 129). "Absolutely real Matter is some mode of the unknowable related to the matter we know as cause to effect." (Page 130). "Consciousness consists of changes so that the ultimate datum of consciousness must be that of which change is the manifestation." (Page 132). "As we cannot fathom the infinite past or the infinite future, it follows that both the emergence and immergence of the totality of sensible existences must ever remain matters of speculation only." (Pages 224). "Though the relation of subject and object renders necessary to us these antithetical conceptions of spirit and matter, the one is no less than the other to be regarded as but a sign of the unknown Reality which underlies both." (Page 446). "A true cognition of

self implies a state in which the knowing and the known are identified; and this Mansel rightly holds to be the annihilation of both." (Page 48). "From the necessity of thinking in relation it follows that the Relative is itself inconceivable except as related to a real non-Relative. It is impossible to get rid of the consciousness of an Actuality lying behind Appearance, and from this impossibility results our indestructible belief in that Actuality." (Page 72). "Is it not possible that there is a mode of being transcending Intelligence and Will, as these transcend mechanical motion?" (Page 80).

Spencer holds that the world is an appearance, and that the intellect can think only in relations. Hence, Reality is unknowable, being unconditioned. Still he conceives a causal relation between the Absolute Reality and the Appearance, and the latter, according to him, must be as real as the Absolute of which it is the effect. He thus convicts himself of a hopeless inconsistency. The relation is as real, he urges, as the terms it unites. Yes, but what relation can exist between the unconditioned and the conditioned? He is called a Transfigured Realist, since he believes that the world is real though it is only a sign of the underlying unknown. As to the nature of the world he says that it cannot be conceived either as self-existent or as created.

Ultimate modes of being cannot be known as they exist in themselves. Ideas of Matter, Space, and Time, involve contradictions. Similarly the origin of the world and the nature of the self or consciousness are insoluble mysteries. The three centres of philosophical interest, God, the world, and the soul must for ever baffle human speculation. Spencer is an Agnostic, and for him the world of positive experience is all that should profitably engage man's attention. Long before him Vedanta had declared that the world is not the highest Reality, and is of the nature of *Maya*, involving contradictions, irreconcilable with itself or with the highest Truth. If that was its pronouncement, it based its dictum on the immediacy of Reality which is intuited through the contemplation of the three states.

But Spencer started with an inadequate notion of Reality. Persistence in consciousness is to him the criterion. But that obviously refers to an alien entity. Consciousness with him is indisputable reality, and that of any other must be judged by its power to persist in consciousness? This lands him in incurable dualism. Yet he believes in One Absolute Reality of which the subject and the object are merely signs. Again, his criterion is questionable. It excludes consciousness

itself from the sphere of its application. Moreover, waking experience does not persist in dream-consciousness, and both are dissolved in deep sleep. Which of these is real? To say that memory preserves all the three for us and thereby all the three are equally real, would be suicidal. Besides, Vedanta does not admit memory in the case, as memory can co-ordinate only facts of one state, of one time-series.

The Evolutionism of Darwin which received the greatest support from Huxley and Spencer may be a very convenient theory for the scientist. I do not question its practical value. But philosophical validity it has none. Natural selection and survival of the fittest are phrases proclaiming their own impotence. The term 'Nature' at the same time conceals and reveals the scientist's ignorance of the ultimate nature of the world which he deals with. Spencer's confession of the impossibility of explaining the emergence or immergence of sensible existences or of consciousness, takes away from the value of the story of the evolutional process. To look upon changes of the world as an evolution assumes the goal towards which all creation moves. But this contradicts his admission of our inability to fathom the infinite future. Spencer is, however, happy in the suggestion he makes that there may be a mode of being transcending will and intelligence. Vedanta confirms the idea, and points to Pure Consciousness for its justification. Another happy hit of his powerful imagination is that change is a manifestation of the ultimate Reality. In this regard it must be admitted that he has a clearer vision of Truth than many who smuggle change into the Absolute. That the identification of the knower and the known annihilates both is true in the sense that they are dissolved in Pure Consciousness.

Spencer's Philosophy is not a complete system. It leaves out of account the spiritual destiny of man, the moral value of life as determining the soul's future, the nature of relation between God and man, the end of creation or manifestation, and a number of other aspects of life which no system can afford to ignore.

J. S. MILL

John Stuart Mill, older than Spencer by fourteen years, was a great thinker and writer, known chiefly by his "*System of Logic*." He regarded experience as the sole source of knowledge and rejected all *a priori* or intuitive knowledge. His definition of body as a permanent possibility of sensations and of mind as a corresponding permanent possibility of feelings, created an insuperable

difficulty: how can a series of feelings be aware of itself as a series? He was, therefore, obliged to admit "a bond of some sort among all the parts of the series which makes me say that they were feelings of a person who was the same person throughout, and this bond, to me, constitutes my ego." While, he believed in consciousness alone and treated matter and mind as mere states thereof, he has not furnished the world, notwithstanding his logical acumen, with either an original or a complete system of thought.

BRADLEY

The Realism of Reid and Hamilton, the scepticism of Hume, and the filtering of German views into English thought produced a powerful ferment manifesting itself in spirited discussions of fundamental points. Men like Bradley and Russel may be said to have given a new impetus to philosophical activity, but it is wrong to suppose that they have supplied new solutions to old problems, or have succeeded in establishing God, the human soul, or immortality, on an indisputable basis. Western speculation is still voyaging without a chart or compass through unknown seas, in 'darkness visible', without a glimmer of hope. Bradley, for instance, has no better definition of Truth than that it is 'that which satisfies the intellect.' (Page 1, *Truth and Reality*). Whose intellect?—we might ask. What satisfies one may not satisfy another. How are we to ascertain whether a truth satisfies all intellects? Obviously, this definition can have no practical value. But his intelligence is penetrative. He discerns the inadequate nature of all partial views. "We cannot," he rightly urges, "identify our whole being with one of its aspects, and take everything else as subject to a one-sided supremacy." (Page 4)." Life is a qualitative whole and cannot be subordinated to the aspect of bare alteration of existence." (Page 6). This is a vindication of the plea of Vedanta for equal regard being paid to the experiences of the three states. On page 192, speaking of empirical consciousness, he shrewdly observes: "To my mind consciousness is not co-extensive with experience. It is not original, nor at any stage is it ever all-inclusive, and it is inconsistent with itself in such a way as to point to something higher." True, that higher entity is Pure Consciousness. Our waking consciousness is contradicted often by itself and by dream-consciousness which replaces it, and except when by the aid of intuition we reflect on the three states it is not comprehensive. That is to say, to be all-inclusive it has to pass into Pure Consciousness. That he feels something like this is made clear on page 200. "The subject,

the object and their relation are experienced as elements or aspects in a One which is there from the first." Again on page 473, "It is the entire reality alone that matters. Every single thing so far as it matters is real *in its own place and degree.* Where there is isolation and abstraction there is everywhere, so far as this abstraction forgets itself, unreality and error." (Italics mine). The last sounds like an unconscious comment on Vedanta. The waking world is real *in its own place and degree.* To raise it higher is to make it an abstraction, an unreality and error. His views on a personal God are crisp and sound. On page 434, he says: "I cannot admit a personal God as an ultimate truth. The highest reality must be super-personal. Unless the Maker and Sustainer becomes also the indwelling Life and Mind and the inspiring Love, how much of the Universe is impoverished? But how this necessary 'Pantheism' is to be made consistent with an individual Creator, I myself do not perceive." The conversion of the Absolute into God, is effected, says Vedanta, through *Maya.* As Bradley himself admits on page 428: "The Absolute for me cannot be God, because, in the end, the Absolute is related to nothing, and there cannot be a practical relation between it and the finite Will." It is evident that Bradley's ideas of the Ultimate Reality coincide to a nicety with those of Vedanta. But they have not been arrived at by the Vedantic method, and partake of the nature and the defects of pure speculation. The world remains an insoluble riddle, and Reality is at best a concept, a conjecture, a fancy.

Bradley's opinion on the comparative merits of the dream and waking states is interesting. On page 464, "The contention," he remarks, "that our waking world is the one real order of things will not stand against criticism. Quit the position of an on-looker on yourself, and imagine your own self in dream, and that while you dream you can recall but little of your waking state. But suppose also that from what you can recall you judge that your waking state was more distracted and more narrow, would you not be right if you set down your waking state as less rational and real? And if you went on further to embrace your dream as the sole true reality, would you not, if reasoning badly, be reasoning still on the principle so widely accepted?" Again on page 465, "How far," he asks, "are we justified when we regard such states as dream and madness as irrational and take their deliverance as unreal? Such a conclusion is *ex parte.* It rests on the mere assumption that our waking world has a sole or superior reality." These quotations contain

views particularly gratifying to the Vedantin. They indicate a welcome change in the attitude of the West in its quest of Truth and Reality. For, to resolve not to be pinned down eternally to the dictates of waking consciousness is to hoist the flag of spiritual freedom. But, Bradley's notion of reality is queer. After subjecting in his "*Appearance and Reality*," all the fundamental ideas of philosophy such as substance, quality, relation, time, space, consciousness, the self, solipsism, etc., to an exhaustive and penetrative examination and discovering self-discrepancies in each, he concludes that in Reality all these must be included and *somehow* fused into a harmonious whole. What is this but a confession of intellectual despair ?

W. JAMES

Prof. W. James of America was a conspicuous figure in the fields of psychology and philosophy. He took up a bold, clear and uncompromising attitude against conceptualism. After Schopenhauer, he was one of those who strenuously fought for the recognition of the claim of percepts, as the source of concepts, to occupy a higher place as Reality. He called himself a Pragmatist, and valued concepts only for their practical effect on life and conduct. To him as to Bergson Intellectualism fed on the chaff of life, while the grain is life itself. He believed in the creative power of faith, and pleaded for better attention being paid to religious experiences of every kind, as an integral part of life. Philosophy cannot afford to neglect them. He worked out no system of his own though he declared his open hostility to "Monistic Superstition." In his *Problems of Philosophy* he has heaped up a number of them to be tackled by future thinkers. "What are thoughts, what are things, what is reality, or the real kind of reality, is the will free or predestined, what is God, how comes there to be a world at all, how are mind and body joined, do they act on each other, how does anything act on any other, what binds all things into one Universe,"—these are some of the questions which according to him yet remain unsolved, and demand solution. His opinion on Being is instructive. "The question of Being", he says, "is the darkest in Philosophy. All are beggars here, and no school can speak disdainfully of another or give itself superior airs. For all of us alike fact forms a datum, a gift which we cannot burrow under, explain, or get behind. It makes itself somehow and our business is far more with its *what* than with its *whence* or *why*." James, however, makes a confession of the sterility of

all past speculation. I will bring my brief notice of James to a close after first referring to two of his most powerful objections raised against conceptualism. (1) "Continuity is impossible in a conceptual world." (2) "The very relation of subject and predicate in our judgments—the backbone of conceptual thinking itself—is unintelligible and self-contradictory. Sugar, for example, is sweet. But if the sugar was already sweet, you have made no step in knowledge. Otherwise you are identifying it with a concept with which in its universality the particular sugar cannot be identical, for predicates are ready-made universal ideas by which we qualify perceptual singulars." (cf. Vidyaranya's similar argument in the first chapter of *Panchadasi* on the relation between a quality and the thing which it qualifies).

James is a serious and fearless thinker. It will not, therefore, be unprofitable to enquire what are his difficulties in accepting Monism. He has mentioned these serially, and I will consider them in the order in which they are stated. (1) "It (namely Absolute Idealism) does not account for our finite consciousness. We are thus not simply objects to an all-knowing subject, we are subjects on our own account and know differently from its knowing."

Remark : The finitude of our consciousness is our own idea which presumes an unlimited consciousness. A limited consciousness cannot have the faintest notion of finitude or infinitude. By its nature consciousness cannot conceive limits to itself, for the limits to be cognised must be overpassed. Besides, I cannot imagine how I can be an object to another subject, whether that subject be another individual like myself or God. For to objectify me I must identify myself with that subject of which I am to be the object. Hence, my subjectivity can never be laid aside. That we know differently from Its (God's) knowing is an unchastened fancy bereft of meaning. For the difference can be realized by us only if our knowledge can include both the terms.

(2) "It creates a problem of Evil. For Pluralism there is only the practical problem of how to get rid of it, for Monism the puzzle is theoretical. If perfection be the source, how should there be imperfection ?"

Remark: This is an insuperable objection, I admit, to all speculative Monism. But Vedanta's principle of Oneness or Non-duality is a fact disclosed by Life. He that comprehends the fact has no option to offer an alternative view. It is coercive. As to Evil which is supposed to have originated from the Perfect One,

the problem never arises when the transcendental truth is realized by intuition. By the side of the one Reality there is no other. Evil is an empirical fact, to be empirically dealt with. To carry empirical causation to the transcendental plane, and make Reality behave like a cause in the phenomenal sphere, engenders the puzzle as to how Perfection can give rise to imperfection. The question is illegitimate. The notion that by accepting pluralism, we rid ourselves of the theoretical difficulty is no credit to a pluralist. Pluralism is a confession of impotence to rise to a higher philosophical level, and strictly speaking is no intellectual advance beyond the position of the man on the street.

(3) "It contradicts the character of the world of reality as perceptually experienced. Of our world change seems an essential ingredient. There is history. There are novelties, struggles, losses, gains, but the world of the Absolute is represented as unchanging, eternal. Monism usually treats the sense-world as a mirage or illusion."

Remark: Vedanta represents the world as a manifestation, not an effect of the Reality. Hence, the characteristics of the manifestation are real as long as the manifestation lasts, but surely it cannot claim any relation to the Reality or the Substrate. If a relation exists the Substrate will be converted into the manifestation. For, relations are confined to the sphere of the latter. Change, novelty and history pertain to the phenomenal. But they are not "really real" as James himself would say. If the manifestation of the world is an illusion from the point of view of the Absolute, how does the world suffer practically?

(4) "It is fatalistic. For Monism, possibility is pure illusion. For whatever is is necessary, and aught else is impossible. We imagine that some things are decided here and now at the passing moment, may contain some novelty, be an original starting point of events and not merely transmit a push from elsewhere, that the future may not be complicated with the past and may be really addable to it. This is what gives us the sense of freedom. But Monism rules out the whole conception of possibles. The world's constitution is not additive. Pluralism protests against working our ideas in a vacuum made of conceptual abstractions. Though we cannot explain how a novelty can come, when it does come we can experience that it comes. Free will means novelty . . . Pluralism is neither optimistic nor pessimistic; but melioristic."

Remark: Fatalism and freedom are ideas relating to duality

or the sphere of action. The fact that every man appropriates his action to himself and regards it as his own, rules out fatalism in life. Vedantic Monism recognizes phenomenal life alone as the sphere of action and inaction. Transcendental life or being certainly cannot admit of either. Similarly, 'possible' and 'impossible' are terms that have some meaning only in the active phase of Life, in waking for example. They lose their import when applied to Higher Life. Hence, since man is, in certain ways, subject to laws of causation, he is also in other ways, free to take the initiative, to originate a new line of activities; and the values of Life are not altered by the mere circumstance that the underlying fact is a transcendental principle. Knowledge and ignorance, success and failure, pleasure and pain, are undoubted elements of empirical life. Life is a continual exertion to secure the one, and overcome the other. All this implies infinite possibility open to the individual on the active plane. In the transcendental, however, necessity is superseded. Action implies want, and is out of place where wants are unknown. Novelties, besides, cease to be such the moment after they appear, and the world ever changing, though it may be additive, is regarded by Vedanta as only an expression of the Higher Reality which is beyond change and changelessness. Such arguments as have been advanced by James, though they may be effective against speculative Monism, are deprived of all force when directed against Vedanta which grasps Reality by immediate intuition.

James's spirited attack on Idealism lacks point. "The impotence to explain Being is," he says, "a conceptual impotence." Such a remark from him is without warrant. Every explanation, he ought to know, must relate to an occurrence, an event in a time-series. Now Being is not an event. It is not a quality that may develop in time. A thing does not exist first and is then provided with Being. The Being of the world did not come into being. Being thus does not fall into the category of things to be explained, for Being precedes explanation. Time itself is a Being and cannot be referred back to anything anterior. It is illogical to require Being to be conceptually explained, and a condemnation of Idealism on this ground collapses.

BERTRAND RUSSEL

We shall next proceed to enquire what changes have occurred in Western speculation with the advance of science. These have been fundamental. Philosophy has been forced to retire from

many parts of the field which she till recently had occupied with unperturbed confidence. The search-light of science has been directed to many dark corners, and things hitherto wrapped in obscurity have been dragged into the light of day. Einstein's discovery of the Law of Relativity has demolished old landmarks, and the territorial divisions between Philosophy and Physical Science have lost their definiteness. New demarcations are in demand, and when these have been completed the net result would be a considerable loss of ground to philosophy and of gain to science.

Bertrand Russel in his '*Outlines of Philosophy*' has lucidly explained how far modern science has invaded the province of philosophy. The problem of perception has become more obscure than ever. "What passes for knowledge," he observes, "suffers from three defects: (1) cocksureness, (2) vagueness, (3) self-contradiction. Naive commonsense supposes that they (common objects, chairs, trees &c.,) are what they appear to be, but that is impossible since they do not appear exactly alike to any two simultaneous observers. If we are going to admit that the object is not what we see, we can no longer feel the same assurance that there is an object." "Now Physics says that a table or a chair is 'really' an incredibly vast system of electrons and protons in rapid motion with empty space in between. But the scientist being but a man cannot more than anybody else see these *electrons and protons*. He sees only certain patches of colour; but he has a learned explanation. 'Light-waves start from the electrons (or, more probably, are reflected by them from a source of light), reach the eye, have a series of effects upon the rods and cones, the optic nerve and the brain, and finally produce a sensation.' But he has never seen anything more than the patches of colour; and the physical and physiological processes leading to sensation, on his own showing, lie essentially and for ever outside experience. Nevertheless he pretends to base his science on observation. The physicist's belief in electrons and protons is due just to an inference more or less plausible, but not amounting to certainty. We think that a chair is as it appears to be and is still there when we are not looking. These two beliefs are incompatible. For the chair, independently of being seen, must be something other than the patch of colour that we see. The *real* chair must then be regarded as the cause of our sensations when we see the chair. The scientist thus falls back upon causation as an *a priori* belief without which we would not seek for a real chair at all. "For the sake of permanence we bring in the notion of substance. The real

chair is a substance, or a collection of substances possessed of permanence and the power to cause sensations. This metaphysical belief is responsible for the inference from sensations to electrons and protons." For the electrons and protons are proved to be no substances, but events, movements and radiations. Thus, in the end, the perception of an object like the chair is reduced to a physiological reaction to a physical stimulus.

Similarly, a scientific law involves memory and testimony. As to the former, Russel rightly remarks: "Remembering may not prove that what is remembered occurred at some other time. The world might have sprung into being just five minutes ago with memory and all else complete." "Testimony is equally unreliable. Physics and testimony depend on each other. Introspection shares a like fate. Dr. Watson says we do not think, but only talk. The difference between introspection and external perception seems to be connected not with what is primary in our knowledge, but with what is inferred. We think at one time we are seeing a chair, at another that we are thinking about philosophy. The first is perception, the second is introspection. Now we have already found that we cannot believe external perception in the full-blooded sense in which commonsense accepts it. What is indubitable in it is the occurrence of a certain pattern of colours. This is connected with me as with the chair. No one except myself can see exactly the pattern I see. There is thus something subjective and private about what we take to be external perception, but this is concealed by precarious excursions into the physical world. Introspection, on the contrary, involves precarious extensions into the mental world. Shorn of these it is not very different from external perceptiou shorn of its extensions." "In both cases what is really a datum is unutterable, and what can be put into words involves inference which may be mistaken." The preception of a chair has a physical stimulus affecting only sight directly, but stimulates ideas of solidity &c., through early experience. The inference may be called physiological. This may be mistaken as in the case of a reflection in a mirror, or objects in a dream."

When, in perception, movement is started in the eye, it is communicated to the brain. At this stage, there may be a reflex or a learned reaction. "Some reflexes are complete at birth and reaction needs no experience, as in sneezing. Learned reactions occur only because of the effect of previous occurrences in the brain. Speech is a learned reaction, *i.e.*, a conditional reflex. Objective

perception can be inferred only from reaction. It is a kind of sensitivity which even scientific instruments possess."

Russel is perhaps one of the first to include dream-experience in the field of scientific investigation. "In waking life," he says, "we are critical of the interpretative hypotheses that occur to us, and therefore do not make such wild mistakes as in dreams. But the creative as opposed to the critical mechanism is the same in waking life as it is in dreams." "All adaptation to environment acquired during the life of an individual might be regarded as learning to dream, dreams that succeed rather than dreams that fail. The dreams we have when we are asleep usually end in a surprise; the dreams we have in waking life are less apt to do so . . . one might say that a person properly adapted to his environment is one whose dreams never end in the sort of surprise that would wake him up. In that case he will think that his dreams are objective reality. But if modern physics is to be believed, the dreams we call waking perceptions have only a very little more resemblance to objective reality than the fantastic dreams of sleep. They have some truth, but only just so much as is required to make them useful." "Perception is only a form of reaction to the environment displayed in some bodily movement, rather than a form of knowledge." All this is crystal-clear. But Vedanta takes us a step further. The difference we make between dream and waking is based upon an intuitive feeling and upon no objective evidence. While we are in one state nothing thereof intimates to us its nature. We take it to be waking, till it gives place to another which in its turn receives the honour. The mere fact of reacting to a stimulus will not in the least help us to determine the true nature of the state. Russel himself refers to cases where there can be reaction without stimulus, as in our behaviour towards a window, which is the same whether there is glass or not. Here the human body is influenced by the law of association which no scientific instrument can develop. Thus the evidence of a real external world which is the store of stimuli is ultimately worn to a shadow. Russel, however, declares that the problems of Realism and Idealism remain just where they were. But his acute analysis of the grounds of Realism is on the whole calculated to weaken rather than to strengthen them.

Among the changes in our conception compelled by the theory of Relativity Russel refers to the following: "Matter has disappeared as a thing. It has been replaced by emanations from a locality."

So also the solidity of matter. "All sorts of events happen in the physical world, but tables, chairs, the sun and the moon and even our daily bread have become pale abstractions, mere laws exhibited in the succession of events which radiate from certain regions." "Waves travel across these regions. We know the causes of these waves, but not their intrinsic character."

"One cosmic *Time* and one persisting *Space* are abolished. We have space-time instead. Our notion of the world's structure is changed. A and B are a long way apart with mirrors to send light-signals. Anything that happens to A after he sends out the flash and before he gets it back is neither definitely before nor after, nor simultaneous with the arrival of the flash at B. The notion of *Place* evaporates. Is London a place? But the earth is rotating. Is the earth a place? It is going round the sun. Is the sun a place? It is moving relatively to the stars. We can talk therefore only of a place at a given time. But what is a given time, unless you confine yourself to one place? We think that the Universe is in one state at one time, and in another at another. This is a mistake. There is no cosmic time. . . We must give up the idea of bodies *moving* and talk of events. An event is anything having a date and place. The unity of a body is the unity of its history, like the unity of a tune. . . All the events very near a given event are its neighbourhood. No forces acting at a distance, no forces at all. Bodies take the course which is easiest at the moment according to the character of the space-time in the region where they are. An atom does not persist more than a tune. Its unity is causal. Cause means an observed law of succession from next to next. No force compels . . The idea of a persisting substance must go. Motion of objects seen in a mirror is fast but not caused by force. Matter is only a series of events." . . "Force felt is psychological as in the case of amputated finger-tip." "Legitimate science neither asserts nor denies persistence." To do either we go beyond experience which can be explained without assuming the persistence.

Russel is an unsparing critic even of the dicta of science. "If," he observes, "a physiologist observes the eye of the patient, it is only an event in the physiologist, not in the patient. As to self-observation no one else can know my toothache so well as myself—because it is not an experience communicable." But this is to fall into the arms of solipsism. For if every experience of a man is private to himself, if the world I perceive with its time,

space and objects is private to me, if feelings and sensations are intrinsically incommunicable, what evidence is there for me to believe in an objective world, the world of physical science, or in other minds? This line of reasoning will not let us stop short of solipsism. Russel himself admits that solipsism is the only irrefutable position for the man of pure reason, though he cannot adopt it in practical life. The fact is that solipsism cannot be accounted for except by Vedanta. Every other system of science or philosophy in its search for Truth under the guidance of reason knocks its head against solipsism and retires in disgust and dread.

His opposition to Behaviourism as represented by Dr. Watson is pronounced and decisive. Behaviourism eliminates all thought and subjectivity and endeavours to explain all acts of men and animals as due to physical movements—mere reaction to stimuli. Even dreams, images, sensations and perceptions are bundled away as resulting from laryngeal movements, accompanied by stimulation of the sense-organs, producing reactions which in dreams are due to the peculiar condition of the brain during sleep. But this theory is by no means acceptable. The dreamer is not aware of these movements but finds himself in a new world of objects. "If the table is really different from its *appearance*, since we infer this reality only from this *appearance*, that reality must be doubly unreal." We shall be landed in an all-round scepticism. "It cannot be said that an object is perceived directly by some mystical epiphany in addition to being perceived through stimulus and reaction, and the reaction cannot be more intimately connected with the object than the stimulus. But for different people, the stimuli and reaction must differ. Hence in every act of perception there must be an element of subjectivity." Russel is right, though solipsism scores a point here also, and derives fresh support from his acknowledgment that "a percept is in the brain and is the most indubitable in our knowledge of the world." The net of solipsism is widened till it takes in the totality of individual experience, when Russel says, in referring to my perception of a star: "What is given is the private space in which the speck of light you see is situated. . . . . The star seen is as internal as a headache felt. . . . Thus the whole space of your sensible world with all its percepts counts as only one tiny region from the point of view of physics. There is no spacial relation between one's percepts and another's; no two see exactly the same object. Each carries about a private space of his own which

has no place in common with another's. Physical space is a matter of inference and construction." But what is the proof that physical space exists, in addition to one's private space? And how are they related? This makes the grip of solipsism adamantine. Against Dr. Watson, Russel urges with reason that "even our perceptions are infected with subjectivity. The account of rats given by the rat's movements is only of events in himself (Watson)." This is a home-thrust, but it renders an escape from solipsism impossible.

The point and force in Russel's arguments, he owes entirely to his temporary adoption of the position of a solipsist. Observe his views on mind and matter. "The conventional views of mind and matter make perception miraculous. The dualism is mistaken. How can a series of physical processes lead to a mental result—seeing? The physiologist thinks he sees the physical processes in a patient's brain. What he sees is *mental* to himself." A similar objection Vedanta raises against the endeavour of the biologist to explain the origin and development of consciousness in the hierarchy of living beings, from the lowest up to man. But all the while he forgets that what he observes is within the region of his own consciousness whose bounds he can never transcend. The whole world which he sets before him for study is the world of his own consciousness which cannot be turned into an object for scientific analysis. Russel proceeds: "An atom may consist entirely of radiations coming out of it. How they come out of nothing is a fact, though unaccountable." "We cannot conceive what the world would look like from a place where there is nobody, *because* if we look from there we shall be somebody there. Matter as appearing to commonsense must be given up." "Matter is a convenient formula for describing what happens where it is not. Materialism as a philosophy becomes hardly tenable in view of this evaporation of Matter." "Common words we use conceal what is private in our impressions and make us think we live in a common world." The triumph of solipsism is complete.

American Realists are said to believe in "Neutral Monism." There is only one primal stuff or material in the world. Consciousness stands for a function, not an entity. Thoughts do not essentially differ from material objects. "There is no fundamental dualism—no inner duplicity." This theory on which Behaviourism must take its stand cannot hold water. Any stuff of the world must be regarded as an object in consciousness and would thereby exclude the latter. To assert that consciousness, which is

the witnessing element in all experience, is a function, not an entity, is a fundamental illusion, for every assertion or denial, every idea of a function or of an entity has meaning only in terms of and under the presupposition of consciousness. Thus the theory of Neutral Monism, assuming a stuff other than matter or mind as the common denomination of both, only plays with a fantastic variant of either. Dr. Watson is the apostle of Behaviourism which professes to explain life with the minimum of assumption, and *reaction* to stimulus is offered as the great secret. As to consciousness it is found to be so recalcitrant that modern scientists have dismissed it as not simply an irrational, but an unreasonable surd, since it refuses to yield to any laboratory treatment under perception or introspection. Behaviourism cannot, however, be acceptable for the following reasons. Firstly, it assumes movement, without cause or aim. Secondly, explanation of perception involves an inference of the reaction of brain and nerves to external stimulus, and this inference is a mental act, not merely physical movement. Thirdly, in dream a whole drama is enacted exquisitely real for the time. But its creations cannot be referred to an external source. It presents movement and stimulus without either actually, and enjoys a quiet laugh at all the futile cogitations of waking consciousness. Fourthly, deep sleep, so natural, so indispensable to life, becomes an unaccountable mystery. Besides, our memory of it in the form of the feeling, ' I slept soundly,' becomes a veritable puzzle. Memory implies former reaction which is incompatible with a state of quiescence. Fifthly, movement introduces some unwelcome guests, time, space and causation which must remain standing enigmas of life. Sixthly, it proceeds on the gratuitous assumption that waking experience is the standard of Truth and Reality in the light of which to assess the value of other states of consciousness. But its primary defect is that it cannot define or identify waking. The latter's presentness, or its giving rise to the particular feeling in me is paralleled by the illusions of dream. Seventhly, unlike a machine, I have the feeling of self or ego which is a store of impressions and a factor of concepts, feelings and volitions. It may be explained away by being likened to the unity of a tune, but no tune carries memory, or consciousness with it, or a sense of its own unity. Eighthly, if I am only a reacting centre, I must conceive the rest of the world only as an immense army of stimuli, and I cannot imagine other centres of reaction, as all I can know of is my own reacting nature. The rest is all stimuli. Solipsism thus becomes inevitable. Ninthly, Ethics, Freedom, Death and Immortality are

deprived of meaning or interest to man. Tenthly, experiments carried on with whatever scientific care and circumspection cannot do away with the experimenter's consciousness to start with, and we have already shown that consciousness is no universal, except empirically. Russsel observes: "Naive Realism is destroyed by what Physics itself has to say concerning causations, and the antecedents of perceptions." If so, can the theory of stimuli survive? In dream and hallucinations reactions occur without any admissible or adequate stimuli. Reactions apparently are self-creative. Granting, however, the presence of stimuli in ordinary waking perception, we can know nothing about their nature, source or mode of action. Is the tree that I perceive a source of stimuli, or the result of reaction on the part of my brain? If necessarily it must be regarded as a percept, it cannot at the same time supply the stimuli, for reaction *follows*, not *precedes*, stimulation, and what stimulated the brain cannot be identified with the accomplished effect of that stimulation. The stimulus has thus to be relegated to the same dark region of shadows to which the objects of the naive realists are consigned by scientific thought. For comfort in suffering, for incentive to duty, for courage and hope under the shadow of death, you look in vain in this dry doctrine of mechanical reaction to outside pressure. Also, Behaviourism as a theory of life denying all thought is a contradiction in terms.

Laying aside Behaviourism to which Russel makes an incidental reference, let us see how his philosophy has to be understood. For one thing it is not subjectivism. "If," he says, "seeing and the object seen are both mental, there is no relation between them, though there may be two sides of perception, subjective and objective. Hence, the relation between the sides is not such as to make the existence of the one demand that of the other. That consciousness should have an essential relation to an object is not true. The relation is causal." That is to say consciousness by itself would not demand an object. Vedanta supports the view. That the relation between both is causal may also be accepted. But when Russel seems to imply that the cause that leads to the perception of an object is an equally real independent entity to be *assumed*, we come to the parting of ways. Vedic Monism identifies the cause with Nescience, which being no transcendental reality does not affect the oneness of Pure Consciousness. The hypothesis of a Neutral Monism, and of the unseen but real external world are

untenable and undemonstrable. Russel himself remarks: "It is not logically impossible that my life may be one long dream, in which I merely imagine all the objects that I believe to be external to me." Hallucinations, dreams, and reflexions in a mirror—these cast an irremovable doubt on the absolute reality of all that we see, including things and movement.

His Ethics is equally volatile. Good and bad are determined by love and hatred. Acts ought to be harmonious, not discordant. These are splendid copy-book maxims. But how can we love one thing without hating its opposite? How is harmony to be secured without taking up arms against present or contingent discordances? The pretext for war has always been to establish real and lasting peace. Two men *love* to possess the same object exclusively. How can Ethics prevent a desperate fight between the two lovers? Vedanta makes the approximation to the higher self of man, and subdual of the lower the motive-principle of conduct. His conclusion is characteristic. "Immortality cannot be assured. To encourage a good life is not the conscious purpose of philosophy, but only to understand the world, not to establish desirable propositions." But his deeper instinct prevails when he adds: "It comes near that large impartial contemplation of the universe as a whole which raises us for the moment above our purely personal destiny."

A. N. WHITEHEAD

We shall now turn to Scientific Realism as expounded by Mr. A. N. Whitehead of the Harvard University. His is a very terse and condensed style. His reasonings are close, but demand more elucidation by means of familiar illustrations to produce a definite impression. My remarks are exclusively based on his work on "*Symbolism*", and such ideas as I have formed from a careful study of it must be taken with the qualification necessitated by his style. But even if his position is wholly impregnable, as it looks from the empirical stand-point, it cannot, I fear, be maintained from the wider purview of Vedanta.

In explaining perception he observes: "We see a coloured shape, and take it to be a chair. This passage from a coloured shape to a chair is due to a train of difficult logical inferences, whereby, having regard to previous experience of shape and colours, we draw the probable conclusion that we are in the presence of a chair. . . . Thus coloured shapes are symbols for some other elements in our experience. Sometimes the symbol is mistaken." "But sense-

perception mainly characterizes advanced organisms, whereas all organisms have experience of Causal Efficacy whereby their functioning is conditioned by their environment." Here perhaps a word of explanation may be helpful. By "organism" I understand Mr. Whitehead to mean any element of the world capable of independent activity: an electron, a plant, an animal, or man. While sense-perception is common to men and animals, in whom it is supplemented to a greater or smaller extent by conceptual analysis, it is utterly absent in physical organisms, such as electrons, and barely perceptible in plants. It is thus confined to a very narrow corner of the universe. The connotation of perception must be widened so as to include every case of interaction between organisms in general, whether living or lifeless. When an electron changes its movement on account of a change in its environment, when a particle of iron flies to a magnet brought near it, the behaviour of the electron or the iron particle is not distinguishable from that of a human percipient, and each of these must be said to perceive in the full-blooded sense of the term. For how does sense-perception act upon us? It leads to some feelings and terminates in an act. Our behaviour is governed by our perception. If so, the electron, with equal reason, may be said to perceive what alters its behaviour. In other words, Causal Efficacy, or the way in which the presence of one independent element of the world effects a change in the behaviour of another, is the test of all perception. It is universally reliable, and absolutely rules out all error and illusion.

Even errors are made possible only by our direct knowledge. We actually see a "patch of colour" with *extension* and *perspective*, and we conclude it to be a man, but it may turn out to be the stump of a tree. When the mistake is detected, the elements of direct recognition, namely, the coloured patch, with extension and perspective, are not denied. Only the inference was wrong. Meanwhile the other element of immediate perception, namely, "Causal Efficacy," or the real relation or interaction between ourself as the percipient and "the stump," must remain invariably the same, whether we perceived rightly or wrongly. Sensuous perception which is direct, Whitehead calls "Presentational Immediacy," and the process by which a mere patch of colour is interpreted as a stump he calls "Symbolic Reference." The latter is trustworthy because, as a rule, it fulfils unconscious anticipations. If after seeing a coloured patch, we take it to be a chair, we ordinarily find in experience that our expectations raised, with regard to its "feel" &c., are satisfied. Symbolic Reference is "the organic

functioning leading from the symbol to the meaning." For the percipient at least, the perception is the internal relationship between itself and the thing perceived, and Symbolic Reference requires something in common between symbol and meaning expressible without reference to the perfected percept, and some activity of the percipient expressible without reference to the particular symbol, or its particular meaning. Usually Symbolic Reference is from the less primitive to the more. This statement is a thorough-going Realism. "There is no mysterious element merely meant and behind the veil of perception. Symbolic Reference holds between two components in a complex experience each intrinsically capable of direct recognition." "No bare sensations are first experienced and then projected. The projection is an integral part of the situation and is as original as the sense-data. We do not see simply colour, or extensiveness, but we see the colour of an extended object, the wall. Thus colour and spatial perspective are abstract elements of our concrete experience of the wall." "This type of experience is Presentational Immediacy. It shows relevancy between events and their mutual independence, which is the character of contemporaneousness. This type is important only in high-grade organisms."

"Other things are as actual as we are. Perceptual experience has three modes, each independently supplying components to our individual rise into one concrete moment of our experience. Two are perceptive: (1) Presentational Immediacy, and (2) Causal Efficacy. The third is Conceptual Analysis." The two former are modes of objectifying actual things about us. "The synthetic activity fusing these two modes into one perception is Symbolic Reference which either indentifies or correlates actualities as interrelated elements in our environment. Symbolic Reference is erroneous when some direct cognition disagrees in its report with the conscious recognition of the fused product resulting from Symbolic Reference. In Presentational Immediacy or sense-perception, the world is disclosed as a community of actual things like ourselves. The relatedness of spatial extension is a complete scheme impartial between the observer and the perceived thing. The way in which each actual physical organism enters into the make-up of its contemporaries has to conform to this scheme." "Thus the disclosure of a contemporary world by Presentational Immediacy is bound up with the disclosure of the solidarity of actual things by reason of their participation in an impartial system of spatial extension."

In reviewing the position of Realism as taken up by Whitehead one might observe that the old problem of perception has not been so much solved as shelved. That problem was and is, how is sensation worked up into the perception of an external object? Physiologists as well as psychologists start with light-waves which, in the case of vision, impinge on the retina, and set up movements in the eye. The optic nerve communicates these to the brain-cells which results in sensation and somehow gives rise to the perception. The Idealists think that the percept is a creation of the brain or the mind, while the Realists believe that it more or less faithfully represents, or is a copy of the external thing. Whitehead's procedure is altogether different. Sensation and projection are not successive acts, but simultaneous. The objects are presented to the percipient immediately, and just as they actually exist. There is no second row of gaunt realities eternally hiding behind. In sensuous perception errors may arise through Symbolic Reference which is affected by conceptual prepossessions, but Causal Efficacy is impeccable. Thus is established "the solidarity of actual things." High-grade organisms, like man and animals, have objects directly presented to them, while these as well as physical organisms unquestionably disclose Causal Efficacy through which their behaviour is determined by changes in their environment. Hence, experience presents to us actual things participating in an impartial scheme of spatial extension. Man is a single percipient in the world of an infinite number of percipients. They act and react upon each other according to their internal relationship. Whitehead uses the word *actual* in place of 'real' and he does so for a very good reason. *Actual* refers to a present experience, while *Real* has a heritage of philosophic import which it is inconvenient to dispose of. When I stand before a building I have an actual experience of the fact that I perceive it. This is so in dream as well as in waking, in hallucinations, as well as in normal perception. In optical illusions, no doubt, there is a common ground as when a bush is mistaken for a man, and Symbolic Reference might bear the blame. But in hallucinations, false perceptions occur without any such real *ground*, and in dreams no external ground can be admitted or claimed. If therefore in all perceptions, there is Presentational Immediacy of actual things, how are these experiences to be explained? Hallucinations may be rare, but dreams are daily occurrences, and no explanation can be acceptable which does not cover these. In the next place, assuming that things are as they are presented, how can it be asserted that

they are as real as we are? Their independence of the subject-percipient can never be proved. In ordinary life we do admit plurality of minds and subjects; yet reflexion on the nature of the subject makes its plurality inadmissible. Even when I grant that there are other subjects, to whom I am an object, I do not for a moment cease to be the subject that I ever am; and that I am an object to other subjects is intelligible to my mind only as another object to itself. The substitution of 'percipient' for 'subject' does not alter the case.

Vedanta agrees with Whitehead so far as the actuality of present experience is concerned. But this is confined to waking consciousness, and the world revealed by it cannot claim the same degree of reality that I as the percipient or witness of waking and dream-experience can lay claim to. Neither the waking world, nor its components, however independent they may seem, can appear or present themselves to my notice except with my waking, no more than my dream-world which must wait on my mood to sleep. It is therefore not correct to say that the waking world or its objects are as real as we ourselves. While I can change my moods and sleep off the impressions of a waking world, the latter cannot set up its claim to exist apart from my waking. To that extent, neither the world nor its objects enjoy any real independence. Besides, Whitehead's admission of the inter-relation of objects renders their mutual independence impossible. Westerners might descry solipsism in the position of Vedanta. For a refutation of the charge, see chapter on Solipsism (Chap. XV). To most thinkers, solipsism is a terror which they avoid at any cost, even at the sacrifice of truth. Vedanta boldly cuts a clean passage through it, and arrives at Reality. From this position it sees all dismal shadows of solipsism and otherness quietly roll themselves away like mist. It may be remarked that Realists generally show scant courtesy to consciousness. But surely those whose aim is to find Reality cannot profitably leave out of account what sets all speculation on its legs. It is to be regretted that Whitehead belittles the importance of sensuous perception because it is restricted to high-grade organisms. One wonders how he could theorize about Presentational Immediacy and Causal Efficacy without sensation and consciousness. His assertions possess a value only in proportion to their agreement with the results of close observation and deep thought, both presupposing sensuous perception and keen intellection. Void of these privileges man would have to be satisfied with a life like

that of a plant, and generalizations and speculations about the reality or the unreality of the world would neither concern him nor be possible for him. Birth, growth, multiplication, decay and death would complete the cycle of his existence.

CHAPTER XXIV: ITALIAN IDEALISTS

HEGEL'S system by its subtlety and logical pretensions rapidly spread all over Europe, and for a time Idealism seemed to hold the human mind in its grip. Thinkers arose in Italy who sought to make his logical movement real and concrete by conceiving Mind as Act.

Modern speculation in Italy is professed to be a remarkable advance upon the Hegelian concept of a static Absolute. This " New Hegelianism " claims to be " the logical outcome of all previous forms of Idealism, and even of the whole previous course of philosophic speculation, preparing the path for the elimination of all transcendental elements in Ethics and Religion, and for the advent of a purely humanistic education and culture." Angelo Crespi regards it as a reaction to "the exclusively abstract and intellectualistic trend of ancient and medieval Realism". Croce and Gentile are the exponents of this new Italian school of thought. In their opinion "neither individuals nor nations are mere tools of cosmic, economic or human necessities. . . . Man as spirit carries his freedom and destiny within himself. Through making nature and history the object of our thinking we break their spell; we make them ours, we rise above them, and begin life anew." Through them they claim that Italy "will initiate the Kingdom of Man and the Religion of Thought." There are no transcendental realities. Man is the supremest disclosure of the nature of the universe, the eye by which the universe beholds itself and knows itself divine."

CROCE

Croce starts from the fact that "the mind of each of us is incapable of directly experiencing anything non-mental and that none of us can even transcend his own private consciousness. Kant had declared that knowledge arises from the *a priori* synthesis of the concept, in itself empty, with sense-given intuition, in itself blind, that this synthesis is an act of the transcendental ego which

is the logical subject of every possible experience, that the transcendental ego thinks and exists only by such an act, and that it creates by synthesizing in thought the very terms of any given experience, namely, the sense-intuition and the concept. For, every experience presumes the 'I think' of the transcendental ego. But how can blind sense-intuition if it related to things alien to the mind give rise to concepts interpreting it? Fichte and Hegel, therefore, rejected the notion that the mind received anything from without, and held that the phenomenal world is not a veiling appearance between our mind and the real world transcending it. It is the real world self-revealing at its different levels. There are no things-in-themselves. "Knowledge is valid, that is, man can know the world because in him the world knows itself, because his mind is the universal mind knowing in him the world which it has made and is eternally making. Mind knows nature because she is flesh of its own flesh . . . The laws of Thought are also the laws of the process of Reality, of Reality in its concretest forms. Dialectic becomes active and creative, a methodology of creation, History itself." For Immanental Philosophy everything that exists is "mind-begotten," and "mind-illumined." Its reality is derived from the act by which mind creates and knows it. For Croce the concept of Reality is that of a system or organism of the essential predicates of one subject. It does not exclude but include distinctions and oppositions. It is its distinctions and oppositions. Its living is their living, each in and through the others." As an example of such a concrete universal concept, Croce mentions spirit as a unity of distincts, a unity of imagination and intellect. The dualism between Nature and Spirit is overcome by Hegel by the assumption of a Logos or God existing in His eternal essence before the creation of the world. But thereby the Logos becomes the only Real. For Croce Nature is a "practical and intellectual construction having as its purpose the exact description and measurement of Reality to the end of its full mastery by man. Man is thus the highest self-disclosure of the ultimate Reality." Spirit intuitively evolving from itself the matter for spirit as conceptual activity, removes the necessity to account for sensation as knowledge. Sensation along with emotions and impulses is what in the spirit's life has not yet found expression, has not yet become an object to itself. It is mere matter. Spirit, therefore, is a self-determining cyclic impersonal activity realizing itself in the two forms of Theory and Praxis. In knowing it moves from the intuition of the particular to the conception of the concrete. Universal.

In action it moves from the volition of the individually useful to that of the universally good. Praxis ever provides material to Art and Knowledge for expression; philosophy and theory provide Praxis with groundwork for creating deeds. This process goes on *ad infinitum*, and the system of forms and degrees of experience is cyclical, the content being indefinitely and progressively enriched. Hence, the process is without beginning or end, and there is no need of an initial or final concept for Philosophy. Each moment or form is matter for the next, and form for the previous. The relation of transcendence holds not between finite spirit and an external reality—God or Nature—but between forms and degrees of spirit as such. Mind is Reality itself concretely considered, and is known to us as a knowing and doing activity.

"The beautiful, the true, the useful, and the good are four distincts, pure, universal, concrete concepts, each giving us the whole of reality under one of its aspects." Each of these is a concrete synthesis of two abstract opposites. Each opposite by itself is an abstraction and is real only in its synthesis with the other. Spirit thus is an activity everlastingly growing upon itself. "Reality is a History rather than a transcendent or static Absolute."

The progress of modern Philosophy from Descartes to Hegel led to the conclusion that knowledge is impossible unless Mind or Spirit be the absolute reality, and unless the object be one with the subject as its creation, that is, unless the spirit is immanent. Spirit cannot go out of itself, and external nature is only an abstraction, severing, for practical purposes, of the content of experience from the experiencing act, which alone confers reality on it. In scientific or conceptual knowledge spirit is not conscious of being the creator of its objects. There is a preliminary stage in which spirit draws from itself the world of its subsequent knowledge. At that creative stage, knowledge is only of concrete particulars, as purely æsthetic particulars, of a world in which reality and possibility are as yet undifferentiated. Pure concepts are universal, concrete and expressive, but scientific concepts are mere class-names. Pure concepts being universal transcend every single presentation, and being concrete are immanent in all and each presentation. Quality, Beauty, Existence, Finality, Evolution are examples of pure concepts.

Perception is the co-existence and interpretation of the universal element, the predicate with the individual element of the presentation, namely, the subject. In perception a given fact is

apprehended as possessing a certain nature, *i.e.*, is thought. "There is no other real thinking. We can only think, *i.e.*, perceive intuitional contents, and we can perceive anything only by thinking it. Thus the rational alone is real, and the real is rational. There are no purely *a priori* or *a posteriori* truths. Facts in being known are penetrated with rationality, and reason in being real is imbedded in fact. Individuality and universality always go together. The subject is the individualised predicate, and the predicate is the universalised subject." Thus concept and fact are identical. Philosophy considers fact in its universal element, History in its factual or particular element. "Both at every moment meet in the same *a priori* synthesis of individuality and universality, essential to any historical situation. Both are knowledge of the present. Knowing is concrete. The past becomes concrete when it is thought as past by and in a present act of knowledge. We know only the present in perception in which facts and reason, History and Philosophy meet. History and Philosophy are thus at every moment the growing Self-consciousness which Reality is ever acquiring of itself as Spirit in inexhaustible process of becoming, that Reality which at the intuitional level merely lives its own immediacy and at the conceptual level thinks that immediacy, comes in each historical situation to know itself as carrying within itself its whole rationality. The Universe is Man, the common humanity writ large. History is not continuation of evolution, but the latter is only an abstract, a shadow of the only concrete process of History." Thought and Being are absolutely identical in the very pulse of life. Presentations are individual and changeable and in each there is something longing to rise above changeableness towards unity and universality and to see them as a world. The world is neither absolute unchangeability nor absolute novelty. Between the eternal and the merely fugitive there are numberless degrees of lasting reality.

"History is a single historical process of a subject which is not empirical, or one among many and which is beyond number and time." "Knowledge and action presuppose each other and the two constitute the rhythm of spiritual life." "Volition is the reaction of the individual to the suggestions from the surrounding world acting upon him." Not being bound by a given condition of fact, it is free. "Goodness is the fullest self-realization of Spirit." There is no real self but the universal spirit which being secondless is free.

"In synthesis with a given situation spirit tastes and enjoys itself as good, but being intrinsically historical (*i.e.*, Becoming being its very nature) it cannot linger in such situation and must pro-

ceed to realize itself through the situation thus created, which would cease to be good and becomes evil if taken as an end in itself and not as an element in a future synthesis. Hence the dissatisfaction of spirit as self-realizing, eternal, and universal Becoming with spirit as realized in any particular historical situation or individual as an end in itself. In this dissatisfaction spirit tastes itself as not all that it should be, as not wholly itself."

Such in brief is the Neo-Idealism conceived by Croce. For a clear grasp of the system I have freely quoted from "*The Contemporary Thought in Italy*" by Angelo Crespi. On the whole it appears to me as an unrivalled effort to explain Reality in terms of Monism, and to exclude all transcendental elements from Life and Thought. We may readily admit that mind is the source of all conceptions and that mind cannot experience anything non-mental, that is to say, what is presented to the mind must first be reduced to the terms of mind before becoming intelligible. But can we so rule out any entity above and beyond mind? If Mind is an activity, a thinking activity, and thinking is unceasing, eternal, how can we account for the persistence of this unchangeable nature of mind through all its activities? That at least must be static, and the problem reappears with undiminished incisiveness, what causes the activity of the mind? The fancied advance of Fichte and Hegel beyond Kant, by explaining the world as the creation of mind is mere delusion. How does this creation take place? No one can assert that this creation is a conscious act of the mind. To say with Fichte that my mind created the world but I forget how it created it, is to transfer to the unconscious a responsibility too heavy for the speculating intellect.

In the next place, why should Spirit realize itself in activity? How can activity enrich or impoverish the spirit? If spirit is all reality, it might remain eternally self-satisfied? Besides, the concept of Reality as an organism is an empirical concept. A plant or an animal which grows, multiplies and dies, is an organism which can exist only as a one among many. Organic life is possible only in a world of multiplicity. The concept of Reality as an organism is inadequate and incorrect, if Reality is to be one without a second. If the process of thought is without a beginning or end, how are birth and death possible?

In the next place, there is an obvious inconsistency between the notion of Reality as a subject beyond number and time, and that of mind as Reality concretely considered, known to us as an activity. Either Croce presupposes a Reality—abstract or static—of which

Mind is only a concrete manifestation and not Reality itself, or his conception of subject beyond number and time is a phantasy of the same rank as the Kantian Things-in-Themselves. Again his position that the universal spirit alone is real collides with his remark that none of us can transcend his own private consciousness. If the latter statement is true, then the existence of universal spirit being but a notion or concept of my own cannot be so certain or indisputably real as my private consciousness—a thought dangerously bordering on solipsism. Moreover, if spirit creates a situation to enjoy itself, why is it ever baffled, ever dissatisfied, and ever on the wing for a new situation? As Crespi well observes: "The reality is ever playing at tragedy with itself. It is a whole which neither as a whole nor in any of its individual parts appears as characterized by any worth. The duality of Reality and Value remains unbridged. To term the transit from one degree to another, the becoming explicit of what was implicit, and spirit a cyclic activity is to play with mythology."

CRITICISM

From the Vedantic standpoint the defects of the system are more serious. What is Reality? That which cannot be doubted or denied. My present experience, my experience of this present moment is beyond dispute. What then are the constituents of this Present? Perception, memory, imagination or anticipation, my philosophic attitude, my desire to know Reality and our intuitive knowledge of sleep and dream. This analysis of experience might appear to do away with the past or future, but as Croce himself admits, the past, and the future are made real and concrete elements of life, by being made the objects of my present act of thought. Hence while their contents might be denied absolute validity except as they satisfy the demands of my present reason, their real implication in my present experience is unquestionable. Now what can be the nature of Reality that presents these elements of life? None of the categories of Logic would seem adequate to describe it. First, Reality cannot be a substance with qualities or activity, for the relation between the *substance* persisting and the rest changing is unthinkable. Next, it cannot be a quality, which has no meaning without a substrate other than itself and without an intellect. It cannot be activity for the same reason. *Activity* and *quality* require a ground or basis, a pluralistic world, for both are mental abstractions from objects perceived. It cannot be the Universal which is opposed to the

Particular, nor a combination of both, in which case the combination is inexplicable. A *relation* desiderates terms external to it and a non-existence or nothing cannot absorb the consciousness conceiving it. A *movement*, similarly, has no meaning without presupposing a point from which it starts, a point to which it is directed; and neither *movement* nor *change* is conceivable in the strictly present moment, *i. e.*, without adding to it a bit of the past or of the future. Thus the idea of movement is an illusive static idea, a dead picture created by the contemplative mind at the present moment. It is inadequate to represent Reality. Lastly, Reality cannot be another *Person*. For, a person being an individual, no other person can include me, the only real person that I immediately know. Western thinkers have traversed the whole gamut of human thought, and have failed to arrive at finality. A concept cannot originate movement, and matter cannot beget consciousness. The idea that consciousness is active, or is change, is another fundamental error to which many futile flights of speculation are due. If consciousness is action or change, what is left to witness, or record both? How can the witness change or act? The attempt to comprehend the nature of the unconscious by means of consciousness, whatever practical good it may do, is a free ramble in the fields of imagination, is to perceive darkness with the aid of a torch, and is bereft of all philosophic value.

Further, is Reality really and incessantly active? What is its condition in deep sleep which is the primary element of Life? If again by its activity, a real world is generated in waking, why does it produce a false world in dream, or false objects in hallucinations? Psychic or physiological theories cannot help to vindicate the fundamental tenet of a system to which there is nothing besides Reality, and Reality is Truth. Moreover, Croce's conception of movement in a cyclic order assumes a mechanical framework composed of distincts. The freedom of the movement is deceptive, as the framework itself must be an eternally static alien entity, determining the nature and direction of the movement.

Personal God and Religion are, of course, banished from the system, but the baby is also thrown out with the bath. Ethics can claim no place in a region where all is Reality, eternally sporting for its own delight, for its self-realization. All is right, or will shortly be set right. Man with his individual griefs and fleeting joys is no consideration for spirit, though he serve as "the eye by which the universe beholds itself and knows itself divine." There

is no real individual self. The name Humanism is ill-suited to such a system. The fundamental error of regarding Reality from an objective standpoint is inevitable and common to all pure speculations; and concepts as concrete or abstract universals betray an inner dualism unhealed, for they must ever refer to, as they are derived from, a world of multiplicity and distinction. The so-called synthetic unity is an intellectual delusion and even if the unity is admitted, multiplicity whether real or apparent craves explanation.

GENTILE

In disposing of Benedetto Croce, we virtually dispose of the Actual Idealism of Gentile also, the remarkable pupil who outstripped his great master. Croce conceived spirit as a cyclic activity of doing and knowing. Gentile rejected the notion of the cycle. Mind, he declared, is thinking activity including both knowing and doing. The object of its thinking is the world which was thrown off by the mind in its activity during the past moment. The world is the debris, a corpse of thought thought. The present is thought thinking, which, however, can never be seized as an object, for the moment we attempt to apprehend it, it has become past, *i.e.*, thought thought. Mind is an eternal subject, never capable of being turned into an object. It is the transcendental ego, in the sense, that it is beyond our empirical consciousness.

I quote from Angelo Crespi, in elucidation of Gentile's system. "If spirit is a unity, as Croce claims, whence the multiplicity of its distinct forms? If these are given and not engendered, how can it be a unity? That is to say, how can unity and its distinctions both be real? As long as there is something merely given and not shown as engendered by the mind, philosophy has not fulfilled its task. There is no real knowledge so long as there is something not fully transparent, not merely to thought in general, but to my own thought, the only thought that I know, and nothing will be transparent to my thought unless it be its own offspring. If spirit is to be something, reality must be relative to thought (Kant), and its being relative to thought implies its ultimate identity with it (Hegel). In order that spirit may be something it must be everything—either everything or nothing. This must be so whether the identity of thought and being be in God only (Berkeley), or in the Absolute beyond History (Hegel). (Pages 140-150). There is no reality which can be affirmed otherwise than by an act of human thought. Even the thought of Reality indepen-

dent of thought, of even my thought, is a thought of mine. . . . It is from this that the whole multiplicity of experience must be shown to follow." (Page 151). In abolishing the distinction between knowing and doing Gentile observes: "Once we admit that the object of knowing is the subject himself looking, so to speak, into his own inwardness, thus realizing ever anew himself by his creative knowing, then since spirit is the only reality and its reality is its activity, the activity by which he knows is the very activity by which he is ever creating the world, that is his own very self. Thus every knowing is a willing and every willing a knowing, and spirit appears as a knowing doing creative activity." "Hence, the dualism of Mind and Matter—multiplicity of experience—springs from the unity of Mind, nay, not of a Mind in general but of my mind. I must start from my mind to explain even the mere appearance of a dualism between thought and some other kind of reality." "It (thought) may have an immediate knowledge of itself as Mind in act but not the knowledge that comes from reflectively setting anything before oneself." Concrete thought is present thought in which the act of thinking is not differentiated from its content. Abstract thought is past thought. "The subject, that is thought as thinking act, cannot become object to itself." "Gentile's idealism is actual, because it starts from this initial concrete thinking act and explains everything else as due to the movement from concrete thinking to abstract thought."

"In a first moment, thought is always concrete, one with the act by which it is being thought, and as such carries within itself its own truth. Truth and Reality are one and the same. We cannot be seriously thinking without believing in the truth of our thinking." Without a second moment we should know only actual thought and no past thought. But the first is followed by a second moment which destroys the actuality of the first thought. The second moment converts the first thought into a real objectivity. The actuality of the earlier act is destroyed by a new act which renders the objectivity of our past thought concrete, which otherwise would remain an abstract activity. The first moment merely surviving in the second moment which is now actual, ceases to be actual thinking. From act it falls into fact, from spirit (active) into matter (passivity). Nature is thus fossilized thought, only past thought. The present living thought considers this past thought as something other than itself and forgets that it is its own offspring. The reality of Nature is derived from its being made the object of an actual act of thinking.

It always exists for a subject and is posited by a subject. The succession of moments is due to spirit being act, process, and process implies identification and differentiation. Spirit acts by creating distinctions within each moment, and by referring them to itself as the subject, it creates the unity of the new moment in which they are preserved. Unity ever grows into multiplicity and the latter is resolved into unity. Each moment negates the past which yet it preserves in a new affirmation. Succession and difference necessarily follow from its nature as *becoming* and are its forms.

"The Creator of the universe is not the ordinary individual with a body, clothes, names, friends, &c., the man distinct from other men, who begins and ends in time, but spirit, or the subject, or the transcendental ego. My deeper ego is not the one I can describe and define. It is my very describing and defining activity, the subject which can never be the object, just because it is the very condition of my thinking of objects at all . . . I can distinguish myself from others only by transcending myself and others, thus embracing within my unity all the differentiating particulars which consequently appear to be mere objects like other things and events. I can only be aware of changes in myself and in others, if I am already something outside such changes, beyond time and space. Our empirical personalities are real only as rooted in and unified by the transcendental ego, the person that knows no plural. To know and love each other truly is to overcome our mutual otherness, to become one, the one, the spirit.

"Spirit is the subject in act or as act. It is concrete unity of intuition and concept, of knowledge and action. It is infinite and universal unity, since there is nothing outside its actuality which is its reality. It is freedom since there is nothing limiting it. Natural entities have their becoming limited and dictated by other external entities and rooted in the becoming of spirit. Besides, becoming is its very nature, so that it owes allegiance only to itself. It is also history ever creating itself and its world and resolving both into a deeper and richer subjective reality. Finally, spirit as aware of its history and nature, that is, of the abstractly objective world as being just its own objectivity, is philosophy, the fullest self-consciousness of itself as a unity and a process in any of its historical positions. If there were other realities, spirit would not be free, its unity neither infinite nor universal, and its knowledge would not be its creation. It would cease to be actuality and lapse into mere passive worthless nature. There would be nothing for man to do. His doing

and knowing would be mere idle repetition. Spirit is creative and is everything or nothing.

"The reality of multiplicity of individualities rests on that of the objective and independent reality of space and time. If the objects were posited *before* the subject and not *by* the subject, each being is individualized by its situation in the midst of others by its where and when. Everything would be resolved into points and moments, each outside the rest. Such an individual would not possess a reality wholly due to itself, but only one bestowed upon it by something external. A's being as an individual would consist merely in his not being B, not in anything positive in itself and self-posited. Therefore the only real individual is spirit in its actual eternal process of self-differentiation and self-unification, in every moment of which universality and individuality perfectly coincide. Man as spirit is his own world and there is no other world beyond man."

CRESPI'S CRITICAL REMARKS (CONDENSED)

1. If as Pure Act spirit is above change and succession, how is it also the subject in eternal process of self-realization?

2. There is no real difference between Naturalism and Actual Idealism. The supreme law of the former is the conservation of matter through its everlasting redistributions and transformations in space and time. That of the latter is the spirit's self-preservation through self-renewal. In both cases time and Becoming are merely the means by which eternal being preserves itself in its aimless and worthless eternity. The eternal subject realizes himself equally well through pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, smiles and tears. Thus there is no room for values.

3. "How can an act of thought differ from another, and distinctions arise from within pure identity, if there is nothing but the thinking act as such, and if thought is not already a unity in distinction and a system of forms?"

4. "An essential mark of consciousness is that of being transparent to itself during its very process. Hence, it is not true that the self known through reflexion cannot be the thinking subject in his immediate concrete actuality. The subject need not pass from concrete thinking to abstract thought and to the creation of a world of objects in order to become aware of itself."

5. The process of conscious experience need not create for itself the reality or the illusion of a transcendent reality. Actual Idealism does not tell us how we know the existence of the trans-

cendental subject, or how we come to have the illusion of an independent reality.

6. The subject must create objects without knowing it. But how can there be room for unconsciousness in a system of which self-conscious thinking is the beginning and the end? Then there are activities independent of the 'I think' of the subject himself.

7. If mind is intrinsically a process, if spirit is act infinite and whole in each moment, the process is simply endless repetition. The whole cannot add to itself by repetition which can never be progress. Pure Becoming is thus identical with static Pure Being.

8. If a concrete actual world cannot be deduced from a transcendent and perfect Absolute, how can we conceive a transition from concrete to abstract thought. If I am the author of the world I know, how can there be anything opaque to the thinking by which I make it?

9. God, the Spirit, would not be a reality separate from and other than the human spirit conscious of its own identity with the Absolute Spirit. Man would be the world's self-consciousness. Spirit is essentially self-realizing, ever becoming aware of itself as subject, going out of itself to itself as object and returning to and knowing itself as the synthesis of both.

10. There is no room for a plurality of personalities. The freedom of the individual is what he gains by losing himself in his family, his state and humanity.

JOAD'S CRITICISM

Mr. C. E. M. Joad, another modern critic of Gentile, objects to his system from three points of view (pp. 62-66 of *An Introduction to Modern Philosophy*). 1. Neither Croce nor Gentile can escape from the charge of subjective idealism, or of solipsism. Hegel steers clear of both by declaring that experience as a whole transcends immediate experience which is partial and finite, which does not grasp the true nature of Reality as a whole, and is not itself entirely real since the whole of Reality is implied in it. For, isolated from the rest of experience, immediate experience is full of contradictions and anamolies which can be resolved only on the assumption of a greater reality immanent in it. Neo-Idealism, on the contrary, which acknowledges nothing transcendent, holding as it does that immediate experience generates whatever is, reduces itself to plain solipsism.

2. Gentile's inability to account for diversity and plurality is equally evident. For these can develop out of unity only if the

unity potentially contained the diversity. But then it would cease to be a real unity. If the multiplicity is to be regarded as an illusion, the difficulty remains of having to account for the generation of an *apparent* diversity from a *real* unity. Mere capacity of thinking and experiencing individuals cannot beget the variety of nature and history.

3. How is the activity to be explained? Hegel's synthesis of opposites gives rise to contradictions which lead to new syntheses. It contains the principle of development within itself. Gentile has nothing but movement without source or end. Why should spirit move at all?

Gentile's theory is further liable to the following criticism. Mind cannot realize itself as Pure Act, unless time is presupposed. An act must be in time. Is then time also a product of thought? But no act can precede time. We are thus landed in a dilemma. Either the act precedes, or time; or both are coeval. The first is impossible, without time as a presupposition. The second makes time a transcendent entity, which would conflict with the fundamental doctrine of Gentile that Spirit is All. The third supposition leaves a dualism unhealed. Neither can time be indentical with thinking, since they are logically separable and their connotations are not identical. If it is a necessary form of thought, it remains as an insoluble element of thought, which then ceases to be pure and transparent unity.

Gentile assumes that self-consciousness presents the pattern of mind's activity, in which mind as a whole becomes the subject to which mind as a whole is opposed as the object. It is thus the same mind which is the knower and the known. It "separates within itself two phases or stages of its being, and permits them, as it were, to develop along their own lines, while remaining itself wholly present in each phase". Here is the rift within the lute. If the mind, the self-identical mind is wholly present in each of its phases, is it really active, subject to change? And does this apparent activity mark the real nature of spirit? Where is activity in deep sleep, in trance, in sleep brought on by chloroform, by mesmerism, &c.? Hence, Gentile's observation covers only a part of life. It leaves out what is opposed to his theory. The transcendental ego is a mere product of thought, of my thinking, and can by no means transcend it. My deeper ego is still an ego, and is meaningless without a non-ego opposed to it.

Of all the speculative systems of the West, Gentile's as well as Croce's makes the nearest approach to Vedanta. He has got

rid of the idea of duality. For, once we admit an entity second to the mind, it must be explained in relation to the mind. Neither conception nor expression being possible except in terms of mind, the relationship between mind and matter, or whatever the second entity may be, must still be within the region of the mind, which makes the assumption of a second entity a delusion. Mind cannot transcend itself. Thus in the West the human mind which started on its career of quest of Truth and conquest of Error, has knocked its head against this mysterious element of life which it could neither ignore, nor digest. The attempt has reached its culmination in Neo-Idealism which conceives spirit as Act. The problems of philosophy are twofold:—(1) the derivation of diversity from unity, and (2) the explanation of the active, the historical side of life, the origination of movement. Realism and pluralism, with their formidable forces contributed by physical science, yet feel their inadequacy to meet the foe, and both beat an orderly retreat. The two sides of life, unity and plurality on the one hand, rest and movement on the other, are standing enigmas beyond human device or diplomacy. The concept of the Absolute makes reality a block universe, that of change and movement deprives life of an end or goal. This result of speculation confined to waking life appears to me to be final. No further advance is possible. *Maya* spreads her wings over all partial views, and in its shadow Truth is dimmed, if not altogether eclipsed. How Vedanta overcomes *Maya* has been already dealt with in this work, and will again receive our attention in the concluding chapter. The failure of the most brilliant thought-systems of Europe to explain duality serves as a powerful illustration of the truth that this duality is *Maya*, beyond partial reason, but not beyond reason applied to life as a whole.

As to the present position of philosophy, A. G. Widgery in his *Contemporary Thought of Great Britain* thus sums up his views: "The general impression gained by a survey of contemporary thought of Great Britain is not an inspiring one. On all sides there are doubts and uncertainties, and a lack of resolute conviction with regard to a possible and acceptable philosophy of life. There is no vigorous comprehensive philosophy which, with established intellectual supremacy, might at the same time dominate the minds and guide the lives of the people. The great problems of classical philosophy, the problems of the meaning of life and experience, are shirked entirely or relegated to a subordinate position". The national mind would seem to have exhausted itself for the time being.

CHAPTER XXV: CONCLUSION

OUR cursory review of the brilliant efforts put forth by the West in its continuous search after truth brings us necessarily back to the starting point of our enquiry, what is reality? I pointed out in the Introduction that Vedic Monism put forward the extraordinary claims (1) that it was a rational system, (2) that its dicta on Truth and Reality were final, and (3) that immortality and beatitude were the immediate fruits of knowledge. I have subjected these assertions to every variety of test and I believe that unprejudiced readers who have followed the whole line of argument will be convinced that Vedanta has made good its claims, and that as a science it establishes the divine nature of man as spirit.

If the Vedantic principle of life's analysis is properly understood and followed, every reasonable man by his own individual efforts is bound to arrive at the same result. That is the justification of the method. Dr. F. C. S. Schiller writes in the *Hibbert Journal* for October 1904: "There are few subjects which philosophers have more persistently forborne to work out, not to say neglected, than the philosophic import of dreams". "Dream-experience suggests a definite doubt of the ultimateness of our present waking life, and a definite possibility of worlds of higher reality." "Of the evil and irrationality that oppress us not a little may be due to our not yet having found a way to dissipate the spell of a cosmic nightmare which besets us". "The exclusive reality of waking experience is not a primary fact." "The notion of an independent external world and independent other persons has indisputably worked and philosophic arguments are impotent against it." "But this independent reality is nothing absolute; it means 'Real' *in* and *for* that experience." "Is it not a flagrant inconsistency to adopt a solipsistic interpretation for our 'dreams', and a realist interpretation for our 'waking' experience?" "No fundamental difference in character between the two can be established." "The solipsistic interpretation of experience is neither impossible nor theoretically wrong." "Do you not *know* (sometimes) that you are dreaming

(while you are dreaming)? I reply, but then I sometimes also suspect the reality of my waking life." These extracts will show the new direction given to thought in Western minds. A dream is known as such only when it is stultified by waking. Intrinsically there is nothing to distinguish them. Each is real within its own limits.

Life manifests itself in three typical states. Of these, waking and dream cannot be identified, each by itself; and sleep is considered as such because the waking intellect finds it a pure negation of all that is familiar to it as life. But sleep by itself is Pure Consciousness, that is, consciousness free from the subject-object form, and is the essence of the human spirit. It is *not* unconsciousness which we can never conceive. The three states do not succeed each other, but are absolutely independent, and our memory of sleep and dream is not memory in the common acceptation of the term. Time, space and causation characterize waking and dream, but their dominion is *within* each of the latter, not outside, so that the states have no connection of any sort with one another. I cognize the states, hence I am in each of them, and yet I isolate myself from dream and waking when I, as now, contemplate them, and in sleep I am wholly identical with Pure Consciousness which is my essence, what I am truly. Pure Consciousness never changes, as it transcends time and causation, and hence essentially I am ever one with it. Change and changelessness are terms of the intellect which works only in the states of differentiation, namely, waking and dream, and cannot apply to Pure Consciousness which is ever blissful, which is a secondless Reality. Reality is that whose non-existence cannot even be imagined. In this sense Pure Consciousness is the only real.

The reality of the world is of another kind. Its absence, no doubt, is unthinkable in the state in which it appears, but it is not continuous in any two states. It is therefore real *in* and *for* its own particular state. The ego as the counterpart of the world is also limited to the particular state, but discloses its higher Reality by being the Witness of all the states, in which capacity it passes off into Pure Consciousness. The world simultaneously relapses into Pure Consciousness also, as it cannot survive the ego, and as Pure Consciousness is the only headspring from which the stream of life flows. Thus all is resolved without a remainder into Pure Consciousness which Vedanta denominates Brahman. Immortality of the soul directly follows, and the truth based on a review of the states is final.

THEORETICAL SIDE

So far we have dealt with Vedanta as a positive science founded on reason, intuition and experience. We shall now take up the theoretical side which opens with the question why should Pure Consciousness manifest itself in the form of the states, and plunge us into an empirical life, in which evil in the shape of continual struggle and affliction finds a place? This admits of two answers; the one, absolutely true and perfect, and the other pragmatic. If the enquirer is convinced that he is Brahman which comprehends all, and which is not to be set in antithesis to the ego or the world, then since really there is nothing else that is not so included, no further question can logically arise. This is the first answer. But in most persons the conception does not rise to that level of clarity, and even after the true explanation is given, they still remain on the lower level and naively ask, why this manifestation? To satisfy such minds Vedanta propounds a *theory*. Manifestation being empirical cannot be connected with the Absolute by a causal relation, which cannot pass beyond the limits of the intellect or of the empirical life. Pure Consciousness must come to be regarded as the Divine Person or God, who creates the world, which is flesh of His flesh, without at the same time losing His own integrity as the Absolute and without prejudice to His own nature as Pure Consciousness; and His purpose is to obtain an objective view of Himself. This necessitated His splitting Himself up—empirically not transcendentally—into a world of multiplicity of subjects and objects. The process began with and engendered contradictions. Peace and harmony were disturbed, and the World-Spirit set Himself the task of recovering them. Without individuation, both on the inner and the outer side, as souls and objects, an objective contemplation is impossible; and self-preservation on the part of each individual led to selfishness, on the one hand, and the inviolable laws of nature, on the other. Change in the midst of persistence, novelty alongside of *the same*, asceticism side by side with self-assertion, birth and death, creation and dissolution, freedom and necessity, all point to the dual tendencies of life, a push forward, and a pull back. Higher beings evolved from the lower, and the evolution reached its summit when reason came to be enthroned in the intellect. and articulate self-consciousness became possible. This marks the stage when the World-Spirit, satisfied with a view of His own riches through the advance of physical sciences, makes a serious endeavour to turn back to its

original state of harmony, by quickening the moral sense and the powers of understanding in man. In the enlightened the balance is restored and God again is at peace with Himself. Such is the story of creation, self-projection and self-retraction.

Hegel's logical evolution of the world from the Being or the Absolute Idea is explained as the becoming explicit of what was implicit. Gentile looks upon mind or the transcendental ego as Act. This is like "reconstructing evolution with the fragments of the evolved". For the concepts 'explicit,' 'implicit,' 'act,' have meaning only in empirical life, and cannot describe the nature of the timeless. The concrete One is by no means one. It is as one as the embryo of an organism, *i.e.*, an empirical one, additive. Vedanta views the One as the perfect One. On that level the other is an illusion : there is no other. It explains the world, therefore, by its doctrine of *Maya* a principle *assumed* to satisfy the intellect which is at home only in distinctions and multiplicity. It can claim no higher reality than the world which it is meant to explain, and has no external cause, as causation is confined to the phenomenal world. Also in reality it is not a power of the Absolute, since power must be related to effects, and the Absolute is void of all relations. Its only function, therefore, lies in pointing to the reality of the world as not of the first but of the second degree. When associated with God as a Personal Being, *Maya* is conceived as power, that by which He is able to manifest Himself as the world or creates the world. As this creative aspect is beyond human imagination, beyond the reach of all speculation, it is fitly described as *Maya* ununderstandable. This problem arises on the side of the world, *never* on the side of Truth.

Maya is taken to be an objective principle holding the secret of the world. On the individual side, it is experienced as the *Primeval Ignorance*, *Nescience*, *Avidya* or *Adhyasa*. All these terms denote the same thing. The last explains the rest. Adhyasa means superimposition. This is the radical characteristic of the intellect. The subject and object are naturally and automatically confounded with each other. The ego, the subject, is regarded as the body, and when the body, the mind or the senses are affected, the ego suffers by want of discrimination. On the other hand, the world is assumed to be the source of the ego which is regarded as an atom in it. This double confusion prevails universally among all living beings. The wisest men never suspect the illusion, removable only by Vedantic knowledge. (*vide* S. B. Introduction).

ADHYASA

Many lances have been broken in the conflict between learned men as to the cause of this Adhyasa, or ignorance. Has it a cause? If so, what is it? Or has it none? If so, why? As this is a question that has vexed many an earnest student of Vedanta, I think I shall be justified in treating it in some detail. Ignorance may be classed under four heads. First, the child is ignorant of many things. As its experience is widened, its knowledge increases. So is it with the grown-up man. The scientist, the scholar and the artist know of many things of which the uneducated, or the common man is ignorant. But there is a limit to this knowledge. When we come to the first principles, such as matter, mind, force, consciousness, time, space, causation, &c., the intellect is dumb-founded. Our knowledge of the world is external, objective. We can never know its intrinsic nature merely because knowledge requires the thing to be opposed to it as object. We knock our head against *Maya*.

Secondly, there is a congenital peculiarity in the intellect. It cannot function except when owned by the ego as its organ, except when the ego identifies itself with the intellect and appropriates to itself the operation of the intellect and its result. For the ego essentially is only a witness. It becomes the knower when associated with the intellect to become acquainted with things. Sankara refers to this radical factor in intellection. Thus our knowledge starts with this natural false identification and all our reasoning except when supplemented by intuition is necessarily tainted with it. When the intellect attempts to understand the *cause* of this false identification, it outflies its atmosphere; for that false identification is the very condition of its functioning. It is as if a musician should try to imagine how sounds would strike him if he had no sense of hearing. This fundamental defect can be cured only with the destruction of the intellect. Again *Maya* prevails against our poor endeavours to rend its veil. This is ignorance of the second sort.

Thirdly, there is a theoretical *Maya* put forward by post-Sankaras as the original cause of the cosmic appearance. It is supposed to be a positive entity capable of hiding the substrate, Brahman, and at the same time of creating the universe. Ignorance as the mere negation of knowledge cannot, it is argued, bring a positive world into existence; and as even after the knowledge of Brahman has arisen the phenomenal world continues to appear, the cause of the latter must be sought

in some other positive principle than merely negative ignorance. This position is untenable. If a positive entity required a positive cause, then the positivity in the latter which is unextinguished must desiderate another positive cause for it and so on *ad infinitum*. Again it is the want of true metaphysical sense that troubles the so-called enlightened with the continuance of the phenomenal; for knowledge destroys the latter not physically but metaphysically. Sankara has fully elucidated this point in his comments. In the next place, it is fallacious to assume that a positive beginningless entity like the causal ignorance can ever be subject to destruction, *cf.*, time. If ignorance is not extinguished by knowledge either the knowledge so called, or that ignorance cannot be genuine, but a make-believe. (*vide* Mr. Y. Subba Rao's *Mulavidya Nirasa*).

Besides, ignorance and knowledge are relative terms and presuppose intellection. When an object is brought into relation with consciousness there is a knowledge of it, otherwise we are ignorant of it. Hence, only the category of objects knowable can be opposed to consciousness to be either rejected or received by it. To treat knowledge and ignorance absolutely is to make them abstractions, unrealities. We cannot *know* knowledge, or *not-know* ignorance. It is an abuse of terms. To seek the cause of ignorance as if it were an entity, is to woo a puppet. Moreover, ignorance is not confined to the waking state of a single time-series but extends its sway over dream too, of all variable time-series. An entity that spans over two such arches is not like a constituent of waking which can have a *before* and an *after* in the same state. Causation, limited in its application to one time-series, cannot enchain ignorance which rules infinite such series. The cause of ignorance of Brahman or of any ignorance is a meaningless expression based on misconception. Causation is an empirical concept begot by an intellect functioning under a false identification, and, as the offspring of ignorance, cannot antecede it.

Fourthly, ignorance as the cause of the world being a theory whose invalidity we have just shown, there is another species of ignorance which is a privation of knowledge, which can be destroyed by the knowledge of Brahman. It is the only one that concerns us, for by the removal of this veil, the highest purpose of life is accomplished. With the dawn of enlightenment, questions about the cause of ignorance of all kinds vanish like the apparitions of a dark night at sunrise. As Sankara declares, when Brahman' is realized as one's self it is perceived to have been one eternally, with no second entity beside, in the past, the present

or the future. It never was, never is, never will be, involved in ignorance of any description. For the notion of ignorance involves duality.

A RETROSPECT

At the outset I referred to the claims advanced by Vedanta, first, that it proved its truths, and next, that these were unquestionable and final. The methodology peculiar to the system was then pointed out, and the central truth established by a comparative analysis of the three states. Truth and reality were defined, and the problem of perception discussed. Ethics was shown to be based on the science of reality, and the exoteric doctrines of *Karma* and *Rebirth* were explained as necessary elements of an eschatology indispensable to an empirical view of the life of the spirit. Sincerity, tolerance, love and righteous action were shown to be the direct outcome of transcendental wisdom, and selfishness was condemned as inimical to man's spiritual interests. The theories of Nescience and *Maya* were dwelt upon, as essential to the explanation of the world, but forming no necessary link in the reasoning that led to the discovery of Reality. The world was shown to be real in and for the state in which it appears, and which it cannot transcend. Solipsism, the bug-bear of all rational systems, was seen to dissolve like snow before the summer sun of Vedanta. Theology was next shown to draw its vital sap from Vedanta, and forms of faith were all vindicated by reference to its basic Truth. The great teachers of mankind, Socrates, Jesus, Mahomed, Krishna and Buddha were seen to disclose in themselves the activity of the same Brahmic instinct, which in Plato, Spinoza, Kant and Hegel worked to produce the great systems of thought that enshrined the imperishable truths so fundamental to the spiritual well-being of man. The Upanishads of which Sankara was the greatest exponent were seen to reveal the deepest spiritual experience of all mankind, and the pronouncements of the ancient seers, on human nature and destiny, to be final for all time, so that freedom and immortality became the birthright of every individual soul. The empirical sciences were adjudged an honourable place, though confined to our waking experience, with infinite freedom to develop and advance, suffering from no impediment within that sphere. Reality being of the nature of knowledge and bliss, our knowledge of the cosmos and of the glories of the divine manifestation for self-expression and self-realization must necessarily increase and result in the enhancement of human comforts.

While the monobasic view—the view, restricted to waking—leads us to aim at perfection in the study of Astronomy, Physics, Biology, Sociology and Politics and forces us to believe in the doctrine of evolution and progress, it is inadequate to pierce the phenomenal veil. The tribasic, or the view of the three states, is hence shown to be the only means of transcending that veil and arriving at Reality. For this purpose, the former view must be superseded by the latter, since Ethics and Theology, the two great pillars of the spirit's empirical life, derive their sustenance from Reality alone.

Some European critics of Vedanta, who cannot realize that the sphere of Pure Consciousness precludes duality, object to the contemplation of Brahman as pure spirit, free from all attributes and qualifications, saying that as a characterless Brahman, it can have no interest to man. The epithet 'characterless' so applied to it is regrettable. It is meant to suggest in the reader's mind everything reprehensible, but the attempt is inglorious, vain. We know a thing with character is a substance, a peg on which to hang all desirable and undesirable qualities. The qualities may at best befit it to become an element of empirical life. But what transcends cannot bear the load of qualities, and cannot like individual beings of a dual world be defined by characters. A character distinguishes, separates, limits. The immanency, the transcendency and the oneness of the ultimate Reality make it ridiculous for us to foist an anthropomorphic character on it, if only to agree with our notions of a decent individual carrying on the government of the universe, much as one of the European powers does in modern times. This is ruinous to the very conception of Reality. In the next place, the Brahman conceived as with or without attributes is the identical being, the substrate of all empirical life. If for meditation, devotion or communion, God has to be invoked, blessed with all auspicious attributes, Vedanta does not proscribe the conception, but it reminds you that Reality remains Pure Consciousness all the same. If the imagination delights in varnishing Reality, let it be indulged in for the gratification of the emotional, but let not the truth be obscured. Vedanta does actually present for the common mind a God to satisfy it in every particular, possessing wisdom, power and mercy in an infinite degree. But the fundamental truth that Reality is one, and that man in his true nature is that Reality is ever kept in the foreground. Dualistic are all theological notions, and they can stand on one only basis, the Brahman intuited in its immediacy by every one in sleep or trance. To descant on the merits of a God with

character, is to eulogize the convenience of tail-lessness on the part of the unlucky fox. (*cf.* Urquhart's *The Vedanta and Modern Thought*, Chapter VI).

This is not the only charge. Among others is this novel one. The Brahman of qualities, God as the Creator, or Ruler is a degraded edition of the other. (*cf.* Urquhart's *Vedanta and Modern Thought*, Chapter VI, p. 153). He is inferior to Reality, and must occupy a subordinate place. Well, if He must, He must. In spite of the reiteration of the central truth that no distinction can be made between the two, that the one in all essence is identical with the other, if a man is still bent on seeing a difference, there is no cure for such a wilful perversion of the understanding. The Vedas proclaim : "He goes from death to death, who descries plurality in Brahman," "He has cause for fear who sees the least distinction." Moreover, modern thinkers have come to feel that God with attributes as conceived by man, the God of Religion, cannot be the Absolute or the highest Reality. We must search further for the principle of all existence. Vedanta alone with an unexampled perspicacity reveals the truth that human conception cannot overstep the bounds of relation and limitation, and our idea of God is no exception. But, Vedanta adds, the supreme principle of life though it can never be objectified can, to be adapted to our wish and capacity, be conceived in any accepted form; and as all is Brahman, the figure which it assumes in our imagination, is for us the holy symbol, competent to give us solace and peace, as proved by the experience of the pious among all nations. The symbol is in truth Brahman.

Professor Radhakrishnan, a most brilliant exponent of Indian philosophy and a philosophic critic of no mean order, has in *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, complained that "the prejudice of religion has penetrated so deeply into the world of philosophy that a discipline which ought to be the most unprejudiced in the world has become blinded on account of the tyranny of dogma or the herd-instinct" (p. 10). "Present-day thinkers force, unintentionally perhaps, their interpretation into the scheme of things and justify what they want arbitrarily and unreasonably" (p. 12). In other words, philosophic speculations must be solely guided by reason and not hampered by religious beliefs. The demand is just. The course of speculation should be free, and truth must be the only goal. Dogmas of religion distort truth, and nullify the efforts of reason. But it must be remembered that

speculation based exclusively on the waking experience leads to no definite result, and provides no solace to the suffering soul. The Brahmic instinct is incessantly working in all enquiring minds, which seem to catch a glimpse of Reality, a glimmering of it, which pure reason so-called will neither disclose nor guarantee. Speculation leads to vague imaginings, assertion of principles by no means superior in value to the dogmas of religion, and leaves the struggling mind in a dignified mystification. Besides, every original thinker starts on his own line of speculation, and no two agree in their conclusions. Witness the wilderness of views about God, the soul, and the world, among the prominent philosophers of all ages, with their Realism, Idealism, Pantheism, Neutral Monism, Scepticism and the other isms. It may be urged that philosophy aims at nothing final. Finality will kill progress which free growth will promote. As science advances and our knowledge of the world increases, our views of life must change, and must react on the philosophical theories. The glory of the intellect is its capacity to grow, and of man is his power to acquire increasing wisdom. It appears to me that this prospect of humanity, out for infinite growth and development, is far from alluring. It is a delusion that comforts the toiling intellect. Meanwhile the problems of life and death, of the destiny of the soul, of the meaning of the spirit's activity stand as an irremovable succession of walls rising one above another before the advancing pilgrim, tired of the hardships of the journey. To tell him that he must derive no comfort from the promises of religion, and entertain no hopes of rest or peace, but must take pride in the manly advance of speculating humanity in quest of truth on the path of reason, is a poor advice to the earnest soul which craves for present truth and has that truth denied. Every thinker is an individual. He is singly born into the world, and singly finishes his career in years "three score and ten". The universe is to him a mystery, as well as his own soul with its moral and spiritual cravings. The clashes of duty and pleasure perplex him. Evil knocks him down at every turn. He wishes to solve this mystery. Speculation leads to nothing beyond his own cogitations. Reason stops before the gate of death. But the soul's concerns are more serious than sport. Is it not natural that under the circumstance he clutches at the soothing affirmations of religion, whether harmonizing with or opposed to reason, and shapes his speculation to suit his beliefs? He certainly cannot wait for the perfection of humanity. He cannot live to welcome that happy day destined for philosophy.

The emergencies, the immediate needs of the spirit leave no room for speculative purity or independence. Such seems to be the psychology of the majority of instances in which religious beliefs colour the philosophic views of great thinkers like Reid, Hamilton, Berkeley and so forth. There were others who boldly remained agnostics like Spencer and Huxley, but their number is small. Mill wavered towards the close. Hume to the end was a sceptic. James and Paulsen were partial to Theism. On the other hand, Kant and Hegel, Fichte and Schelling landed on something definite. They felt that they had somehow sensed the Reality, and they could dispense with the aid of religion. Hence the fearless flights of their speculative imagination. Vedanta alone, while justifying the assertions of religion, provides, on the basis of reason and intuitive experience, the method by which Truth can be ascertained by every aspiring soul, and Reality not merely speculated on but realized as an immediacy. It alone can deliver the goods.

The method adopted by the ancient seers of India for the discovery of Reality cannot be superseded or stultified by any other. It enabled them to build up a science whose excellence consists in this, namely, that the correct pursuance of the method on the part of any competent intellect will lead it to a direct perception of Truth. Hence, the scientific nature of Vedanta can never become liable to dispute. I have dealt in this book only with Vedic Monism, as in my opinion it alone can stand the test referred to above. Given the method, the Truth must necessarily follow. No opinion of others, no authority, scriptural or other, no tradition however sacred, no interpretation ever so learned, should be called in to support a belief in things beyond man's experience. The composers of hymns, the writers of monumental works, were but mortal men whose opportunities to know were circumscribed by life; and a peep beyond life could still be but a peep *in* life. Life must contain Truth, for Life is Truth.

On the other hand, I admit that there are in India other schools of thought equally claiming to be Vedantic. The founders of these religious sects have a large following and have undoubtedly ministered to the spiritual needs of numberless souls. I will not minimize their worth or importance. But their systems are not based on a scientific method. Professing a faith in the authority of the scriptures, they yet strangely read into them convictions of their own. To prove the latter they quote the former which again they interpret so as to favour their respective views. This is inevitable as they are not equipped with an independent method.

Between interpretation and dogmatism, they seek to grind out the truth as between the upper and lower stones of a mill. Deprived of these aids, their speculation, often deep and subtle, has no general interest, though it cannot be denied that their doctrines give comfort to many a stricken soul; and saintly characters, filled with learning and wisdom, have adorned the pages of their religious history. Vedic Monism, on the contrary, is not a sectarian faith, does not live on interpretations of texts, but is a science of the spirit, of the deepest interest to all mankind. If this non-dualism pretend to any value at all, it can do so only as a pure science, with a universally available method, and a truth that concerns every living being without social, political, or climatic distinctions. Brahman which is All must be the common property of all. No special privileges, no incommunicable rights.

The illusion of some scholars is peculiar. Their study of the scriptures has not brought them to the goal of enquiry. They modestly confess their ignorance of Brahman, and wait for a special *illumination* to open their spiritual eyes. They believe in the Truth as a dogma, for it has the sanction of Vedic tradition. Another class, of a more scientific cast of mind, look upon all teachings from the historical point of view, which is the modern vogue. These are formulators of theories without end. Their cult is evolutional. The human mind is gradually developing. Our ideas depend on environment and external conditions. Truth, absolute truth, must be nowhere looked for. From words and phrases, interpreted by reference to their historical setting, they conclude that the ancient sages made slow, though remarkable, endeavours to arrive at truth, but it is wrong to suppose that theirs is the last word in philosophy, that they were infallible, or that their conclusions are final. Such a belief would lead to mental stagnation, while growth, eternal growth, is the order of Nature. Well, I need not comment on this attitude. Development and growth are certainly the characteristics of empirical life, in which Time is the ruling factor. Our mental and social conditions as well as external nature are subject to incessant change. But the intuition which enables us to view the three states, as their witness, takes us beyond the range of Time and Change, and cannot be subverted by any intellectual legerdemain; and such truth as it reveals ought to fear no successive editions. To extend Change to its Substrate is to misapply the principle of evolution.

The principle of Vedanta is indeed all-embracing. There is no aspect or condition of life to which it is not applicable. In private

or social life, it makes for harmony, love and peace. It banishes all forms of intolerance and fanaticism. Nations as well as individuals find in it an unfailing means of adjusting their mutual relations. International leagues, advocates of Imperialism and Home Rule, dealing with questions of war and peace, of commerce and polity, will, under its guidance, adopt ways and measures that ought to conduce to the lasting good of all. Recognizing the selfhood, the Brahman-hood of all, you cannot raise your hand against another, for that other, whether an individual, a community or a nation, is your own self and none else. In contemplating injury to another, you injure yourself, and no one will injure himself, "*Na hinasti atmana atmanam*". (*Gita* XIII, 29.)

An impression has somehow come to prevail that Vedanta leads to quietism, and that a Vedantin retires from all activity and becomes dead to the world. He is indifferent to the struggles of his fellow-men for social amelioration and ceases to be a living asset to his country. This is a mistaken fear. One who realizes the Truth finds that Reality never can be contaminated by pure self-less action, which is no action in the higher view. It has no power to bind the soul. It is selfishness and low motives that, on the contrary, debase an act. Hence, he who engages in acts that are intended for the good of society knows himself to be free from the bonds of *Karma*, while he who from cowardice or to serve private ends looks on unmoved, leaving others to strive against the malignant forces of unrighteousness and vice, is sinking deeper and deeper in that moral and spiritual quagmire from which no utterance of life-less formulas can save him. He is the slave of *Karma*, though he never acts. Gita rightly distinguishes between the inaction of a true Jnani, and that of a pretender. (IV, 18). The former is never weary of working for the common well-being, the latter avoids all manly action, just to secure his own safety and comfort. The action of the enlightened cannot affect his freedom, the ignoble inaction of the selfish will only tighten the bonds of *Karma* and lengthen the course of *Samsara*. When Arjuna, moved to tears at the sight of his kinsmen whom he had to fight, flung down his weapons in the battle-field, Krishna exclaimed: "Whence this faint-heartedness, O Arjuna, loathsome to a self-respecting soul, incompatible with honour, incompatible with hopes of heaven?" (*Gita* II, 1-2).

Nor will the Vedantin be lacking in diligence or zeal in literary, artistic or scientific pursuits. He ransacks every corner of the universe to admire its beauties, to know and profit by the variable or

constant ways in which Nature carries out her mysterious processes. For, he is the eye through which Brahman appreciates its own power and wisdom, realizes objectively its own magnificence. By his activities the Vedantin creates new situations; for endless novelties are lying hid in the inexhaustible resources of the Almighty to be ever disclosed, ever developed. He thus contributes no mean quota to the making of the world's history, to the enacting of the grand drama of nature, to the success of the Divine sport, which all empirical life is. The thought of the future dissolution of the earth or of his own body, through celestial cataclysms or death, will not disturb him, as he knows that he is in essence Pure Consciousness, which is beyond the ravages of time or circumstance. If still he feels that all this is glamour, illusion, this knowledge that it is so gives him a mastery over it; from which he need not turn away if he realizes at the same time the freedom which that knowledge brings. This is true asceticism, to work without an eye to fruits, to live and act for Brahman, to preserve one's own life for the service of all beings. It is to consecrate life. A Vedantin can give no room to indifference or indolence, as he is incessantly impelled by the World-Spirit to take an active part in the development of life. Being identical with that spirit his freedom is untouched, for his action is enforced by no alien entity.

VALUES OF LIFE

Experience tells me that I am not simply a man among men, an empirical entity, but also Brahman, the all, a transcendental Being. If this were not so, the values of life which make life a privilege, a continual joy, would become enigmatic, nay meaningless. We love *freedom.* Why? Empirical life would point to determinism as the true doctrine. Everything happens by necessity, unceasing interaction between forces ever operating. Nothing, neither an atom, nor a living being, can claim independence of the rest. How then do we crave for freedom, which ought to be theoretically impossible? We do so, because, transcendentally, we are Reality, the secondless Being; and we should be false to our higher nature if we could allow of constraint or limitation. At the same time, the whole world is that Reality, and we acknowledge this truth when we part with our freedom in recognition of the right of others to be as free as ourselves. Love of *truth* is not simply a social convenience, but a reflection of our nature as Truth. Falsehood, unreality, is opposed to our very essence. We cannot

bear it. *Love* itself is a divine instinct. It breaks down the barrier between man and man, for Reality brooks no separation or division. *Duty* comes as a call from Heaven to display by action our allegiance to a higher principle, and our identity with that principle whose activity waits not for time and circumstance, but defies them. Courage lifts the soul above fear. Where there is no alien entity there can be no cause for fear.* Cowardice is not unmanliness so much as crass stupidity. *Beauty* is an immediate presentation of Brahmic felicity, an elevation of the soul above the subject-object distinctions of the intellect. *Righteousness* is the triumph in action of the higher over the lower self. The subdual of ignorance by Pure Consciousness is *knowledge* or release. We continually seek *happiness* and sensory pleasures which end in ennui. Yet life is one long quest for peace of the soul, for we instinctively feel that happiness is the birthright of the spirit as Brahman. Our *faith* in God, our hopes for the future, our religious devotion, and renunciation of temporal joys, are all rooted in our essentially transcendental nature, without which the values of life would be a mockery —a delusion.

MODERN CIVILIZATION

Modern civilization is passing through a crisis. Old landmarks are fast disappearing. Religion has lost its hold on men's minds. A moral and spiritual upheaval is threatening; and a restlessness is spreading all round whose causes lie deep in the free nature of the spirit. Science has not brought peace or harmony. Governments are daily faced with problems of internal and external security. Political ideas undergo ceaseless change. Philosophical doctrines are in the melting pot. The civilization which raised glorious expectations is proving a mirage. It has demonstrated its potency for destruction, not its sympathy for universal freedom and contentment. Its promises are seductive, its performances poor. The reason is plain. Advancement in knowledge has awakened new notions of rights and privileges. Democracy makes every man feel that he is the equal of every other, and when this is denied, an appeal to arms ensues. We are thus thrown back into the conditions of savagery that marked the primitive stage of the caveman. The heart of a civilization which panders to the cravings of the senses, which aims at glitter and polish, which adores Mammon and dominion, which plays at righteousness and justice,

* "*Dvitiat vi bhayam bhavati.*"—*Brihad. Up.*

which victimizes the weak and the poor for the advantage of the rich and the powerful, cannot be sound. Vedanta unveils the selfishness at its core, which it condemns in all forms, in individuals or nations alike. For, power and enjoyment, when not directed by a lofty ethics inspired by the coercive demands of our spiritual nature, is certain to be utilized for the oppression of the weak. It produces a disturbance in the scheme of the world-governance leading to cataclysms which will wipe out whole nationalities from the face of the earth.

Bertrand Russel observes that philosophy is not bound to provide morals, or satisfaction to man. It need not discover the soul of goodness in things evil, or justify the scheme of things in the midst of which we live. It is a pursuit of Truth, and Truth must be accepted whether agreeable or disagreeable. Well, this may be true of unbridled speculation. But Vedanta shows that the highest truth is identical with happiness, and that the instincts of the common man who believes that philosophy will bring cheer and comfort and make men better, are true and divine. Mr. A. W. Benn writes: "The world has always claimed more from philosophers than from men of professional distinction in science, art and politics; demanding from them not only high intellect, but high character, a marked superiority to the vulgar weaknesses and ambitions which with those others may be overlooked for the sake of their eminent services to the community". (p. 2, *Ancient Philosophy*).

The modern world has hopelessly drifted away from the spirit of every religion, and though fertile in the production of articles of trade and of means of physical enjoyment has utterly failed to secure human happiness. The basis of religion, on the contrary, is Truth, Love and Self-sacrifice. Jesus taught that riches drew away the heart from God. Mahomed, like Ramanuja, laid stress on the equality of all men before God. Buddha deprecated injury to the smallest creature. Krishna declared that worship in any form was acceptable to Him. Sankara emphasised the oneness of Reality. Madhva declared that substance, action, time, nature, and even the individual soul derived their existence from His Grace. Mahatma Gandhi, the 'modern Christ', stands for Truth, Love and Non-violence. But the man of refinement to-day laughs at religion with its fanciful rewards and idle threats. "The delights of this world," he says, "are enough for me. Let the credulous and the timid look after their future, and leave the present to me." This is disastrous gaiety. Heaven is not to come, but is here in every thought and act of ours.

Earth is Heaven, if you make it such; and the soul cannot be flirted with, drunk or gambled away. In the words of Wordsworth, ' It comes from afar, and has elsewhere its setting.' Moments of compunction, of remorse, of bitter despair, overtake the man of pleasures which one day turn ashes in his mouth, and he flies to suicide for relief. Vedanta, like other systems of thought, has had its admirers and detractors. It has been praised and vilified, traduced and ridiculed by turns. It has been subjected to the constant fire of Indian and foreign criticism. But when all has been said, the outstanding fact remains that it is the science of wisdom and happiness, of truth irrefutable and vital to the perennial interests of man.

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